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## A Study of Charles James Fox

A study of the political worth of any man during a particular period of his life cannot begin and end on specific dates. This is particularly true of Charles James Fox who began his political career as a violent Tory in the British House of Commons in 1769 and reached the end of his life on a note of equal violence - as a liberal Whig.

For this reason, while the emphasis of this study is on the period of Fox's career from the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 to the secession of the liberal Whigs from parliament in 1797, the first section is devoted to a consideration of the growth of Fox's principles during the first twenty-odd years he sat in parliament. These years encompassed the American Revolution (during which Fox became an ardent and outstanding Whig), his two brief periods in office as Foreign Secretary, his controversial coalition with Lord North and his even more controversial stand on the Regency Crisis of 1788-89. During this period Fox's liberalism and his fear of any growth in the power of the English crown became the basic tenets of his political career.

A background of Fox's liberalism and of his controversial political actions during the first part of his career is a necessity in considering his even more controversial stand on the French Revolution and the changes that revolution affected in England. Fox, the liberal, welcomed the French Revolution as the beginning of liberty for the French people, but unlike the majority of the English nation, he retained this view long after the advent of the French republic and the first signs of an aggressive French nationalism.



The first of these was the discovery of gold in California in 1848. This led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The second was the discovery of gold in Nevada in 1859. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The third was the discovery of gold in Colorado in 1859. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The fourth was the discovery of gold in Idaho in 1860. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The fifth was the discovery of gold in Montana in 1862. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The sixth was the discovery of gold in Wyoming in 1869. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The seventh was the discovery of gold in Utah in 1871. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The eighth was the discovery of gold in Arizona in 1876. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The ninth was the discovery of gold in New Mexico in 1878. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The tenth was the discovery of gold in Texas in 1880. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The eleventh was the discovery of gold in Oklahoma in 1889. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The twelfth was the discovery of gold in Kansas in 1890. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The thirteenth was the discovery of gold in Nebraska in 1891. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The fourteenth was the discovery of gold in Iowa in 1892. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The fifteenth was the discovery of gold in Missouri in 1893. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The sixteenth was the discovery of gold in Illinois in 1894. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The seventeenth was the discovery of gold in Indiana in 1895. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The eighteenth was the discovery of gold in Ohio in 1896. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The nineteenth was the discovery of gold in Pennsylvania in 1897. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The twentieth was the discovery of gold in Maryland in 1898. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The twenty-first was the discovery of gold in Delaware in 1899. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The twenty-second was the discovery of gold in Virginia in 1900. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The twenty-third was the discovery of gold in North Carolina in 1901. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The twenty-fourth was the discovery of gold in South Carolina in 1902. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The twenty-fifth was the discovery of gold in Georgia in 1903. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The twenty-sixth was the discovery of gold in Florida in 1904. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

In England the growing distrust of the new France in the early 1790's was complicated by an increasingly radical agitation for the reform of the English parliament inspired by the example of the French, and France's declaration of war upon England in February, 1793. In the face of almost country-wide indignation directed against this radical agitation, Fox continued to defend the aims of the reformers (although he did not agree with the more radical plans for reform) and to oppose the war with France which he believed to be especially unjustifiable if the English government hoped to restore the old monarchy in France.

Fox's staunch support of liberalism in the face of the growing reactionary opinions of the majority of the English nation was responsible for the disruption of the old Whig party at the end of 1792. In the years that followed, Fox was the guiding spirit of a small group of Whigs who remained the only champions of liberalism in the British parliament and, after parliament's approval of the repressive legislation of 1795, the only champions of liberalism that could be heard in England. The parliamentary opposition of the liberal Whigs continued until the spring of 1797 when Fox, finally convinced that he could do no more for a liberal cause, decided to leave parliament until he again could be of use to his countrymen.

While the actions of Fox after 1789 were viewed with suspicion by the majority of his compatriots, during the years that followed he was guided by his liberal principles and during these years he made his greatest contribution to English political life.

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

"A STUDY OF  
CHARLES JAMES FOX"

A DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF MASTER OF ARTS

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

by  
E. LOIS HILL

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## C O N T E N T S

Major Events in the Life of Charles James Fox.

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MAJOR EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF CHARLES JAMES FOX

TO 1797

- 1749 - - Birth of Charles James Fox, 3rd son of 1st Lord and Lady Holland
- 1768 - - Fox elected to parliament for Midhurst
- 1769 - Feb. - Wilkes elected for Middlesex and expelled by Commons  
Mar. - Fox takes his seat in parliament
- 1770 - Jan. - Lord North in office  
Feb. - Fox made Jr. Lord of Admiralty  
- Grenville Election Bill passed - Fox opposes
- 1771 - - Lord Mayor's trial - Fox supports government  
- Portland-Lowther dispute - Fox supports Lowther  
- New Shoreham corruption scandal - Fox opposes investigation
- 1772 - Feb. - Fox resignation to oppose Royal Marriage Bill  
Apr. - Fox bill to repeal Marriage Act of 1753 - defeated  
Dec. - Fox appointed Jr. Lord of the Treasury  
- Sir Wm. Meredith petition vs. 39 Articles - Fox opposes
- 1773 - Feb. - Petition vs. 39 Articles - Fox supports petition  
- Fox's attack on Clive  
Dec. - Boston Tea Party
- 1774 - Feb. - Trial of Woodfall the printer - Fox supports prosecution and forces North to vote with him





- 1774 - Feb. - Renewal of Grenville Election Bill passed - Fox  
(cont'd.)        opposes
- Fox dismissed from ministry by North
- Apr. - Fox first vote with Rockingham Whigs on repeal  
         of tea duty
- July - Death of Lord and Lady Holland
- Nov. - Death of brother, Stephen Fox, 2nd Lord Holland
- 1775 - Apr. - American War begins
- 1776 - July - American declaration of independence
- 1777 -        - Rockingham Whigs secede from parliament - Fox  
         remains
- 1778 - Feb. - French alliance with America - Fox announces it  
         to parliament
- 1779 -        - Agitation for economic reform
- 1780 - Feb. - Meeting of Westminster Association - Fox supports  
         reform
- June - Gordon Riots
- Autumn - Fox elected for Westminster
- 1781 -        - Pitt in House of Commons
- 1782 - Mar. - Fall of Lord North's government
- Rockingham-Shelburne ministry - Fox, Foreign Sec.
- June - Death of Rockingham
- July - Resignation of Fox
- 1783 - Feb. - Shelburne resignation as head of ministry
- Apr. - Fox-North coalition in power.- Fox, Foreign Sec.



- 1783 - Sept. - Peace treaties signed ending American War  
(cont'd.)
- Nov. - Fox's India Bill passed in Commons
- Dec. - Defeat of India Bill in Lords
- Dismissal of coalition - Pitt ministry in power
- 1784 - Mar. - General election - Foxites heavily defeated
- (to 1785)- Scrutiny of Fox's election for Westminster
- 1785 -
- Pitt's Irish Commercial Bills passed - Fox opposes
- Pitt's attempt at reform defeated - Fox supports bill
- Accession of Elector of Hanover (George III) to German Confederation - Fox disapproves
- 1786 -
- Pitt supports Prussian troops in Holland - Fox approves
- English commercial treaty with France passed - Fox opposes
- 1788 - Feb. - Impeachment of Warren Hastings - Fox supports
- Aug. - English alliance with Holland & Prussia - Fox supports
- Nov. - Regency crisis over insanity of George III
- 1789 - Feb. - Recovery of George III
- Mar.
- May - Beginning of French Revolution
- Attempt to abolish slave trade - Fox supports
- Motion to repeal Test & Corporation Acts - Fox supports
- July - Fall of the Bastille in Paris
- Nov. - Dr. Price's sermon praising the French Revolution





- 1790 - Feb. - Debate on army estimates - Fox praise of French Revolution brings first dispute with Burke
- Mar. - Fox motion for repeal of Test & Corporation Acts - defeated
- Flood motion for parliamentary reform defeated - Fox supports bill
- May - Nootka Sound dispute with Spain - Fox supports government but critical of settlement
- June - Parliament dissolved
- Aug. - French abolition of feudalism and declaration of the "Rights of Man"
- Nov. - Publication of Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution
- 1791 - Feb. - Catholic Relief Bill passed - Fox supports
- Publication of first part of Paine's Rights of Man
- Mar. - Oczakow debate - Fox successful opposition to Pitt's policy
- Apr. - Slave trade question - Fox supports abolition
- May - Burke breaks with Fox during Quebec Bill debate
- Fox's Libel Bill passed
- Motion to repeal Test & Corporation Acts defeated - Fox supports bill
- June - Flight and recapture of French royal family
- July - Birmingham Riots
- Publication of Burke's From the New to the Old Whigs
- 1792 - Jan. - Formation of London Corresponding Society
- Spring - Revival of Constitutional Society
- Feb. - Austrian-Prussian defensive alliance
- Apr. - France at war with Austria



- 1792 - Apr. - Motion on slave trade - Fox supports  
 (cont'd.) - Formation of Friends of the People - Fox disapproves  
 - Grey notice of motion on reform - Fox supports
- May - Royal Proclamation against seditious writings - brings Whig split in parliament on vote  
 - Gradual abolition of slave trade approved in Commons but lost in Lords
- June - Negotiations for Whig-Tory coalition - fail  
 July
- July - Duke of Brunswick Manifesto
- Aug. - Deposition of French king
- Sept. - Massacres at Paris
- Sept. - French victories on Continent
- Nov. - English alarm over reform societies
- Nov. - French decrees re. Scheldt and aid to other peoples
- Dec. - First reform convention at Edinburgh  
 - Trial of Thomas Paine  
 - Pitt calls out the militia to quell English reform agitation  
 - Pitt calls parliament early  
 - Split of Whig party over reform and French crisis  
 - Fox motion for minister to France - defeated  
 - Alien Bill passed - Fox opposes
- 1793 - Jan. - Execution of Louis XVI
- Feb. - French declaration of war on England  
 - Fox resolutions on war with France - defeated
- May - Grey reform motion defeated - Fox supports motion
- June - Fox first peace resolution - defeated



- 1793 - July - Trials of Scottish reformers, Muir and Palmer  
 (cont'd.)  
       Nov. - Second reform convention at Edinburgh  
       Dec.
- 1794 - Mar. - Parliamentary discussion of Scottish trials  
               - Whitbread motion for peace defeated - Fox supports motion
- Apr. - Public meeting of Corresponding Society  
               - Debate on Prussian subsidy - Fox disapproval
- May - - Dinner meeting of Constitutional Society including other reformers and members of parliament  
               - Arrests of leading reformers  
               - Suspension of Habeas Corpus  
               - Fox peace motion - defeated
- July - Portland Whig coalition with government
- Oct. - Acquittal of leading reformers
- Dec. - Parliamentary session begins - attempt by Sheridan and Fox to have suspension of Habeas Corpus repealed  
               - Wilberforce support of peace and opposition to Pitt
- 1795 - Jan. - Suspension of Habeas Corpus renewed  
               - Grey motion for peace - defeated
- Feb. - Debate on loan to Emperor - Fox opposes it
- Mar. - Fox motion on state of the nation
- Apr. - Prussia makes peace with France
- May - Holland makes peace with France
- Summer - Sporadic riots in England
- July - Spain makes peace with France
- Oct. - Corresponding Society meeting at Copenhagen Fields  
               - George III mobbed on way to open parliament





- 1795 - Nov. - Seditious Meetings & Treasonable Practices Bills  
(cont'd.) passed
- Protest meetings of Foxites and English public
- Dec. - King's message on willingness to negotiate with  
France
- 1796 - Feb. - Grey motion for peace - defeated
- Mar. - English attempt to negotiate with France
- May - Fox motion on conduct of the war - defeated
- Fall - Further attempts by English to negotiate with France
- Sept. - Spain declares war on England
- Dec. - Rupture of negotiations with France
- 1797 - Apr. - Austrian armistice with France
- May - Fox motion for repeal of Seditious Meetings Act -  
defeated
- Grey motion for reform - defeated
- Foxite Whig secession from parliament
-



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Brown, <u>French Revolution in England</u>          | - <u>The French Revolution in English History.</u>   |
| Butler, <u>Reform Bill</u>                          | - <u>The Passing of the Great Reform Bill.</u>   |
| Fell, <u>Memoirs of Fox</u>                         | - <u>Memoirs of the Public Life of Charles James Fox.</u>  |
| Fitzmaurice, <u>Shelburne</u>                       | - <u>Life of William, Earl of Shelburne.</u>   |
| Fortescue, <u>George III</u>                        | - <u>Correspondence of King George III from 1760 to December, 1783.</u>  |
| <u>Fox: French Revolution Speeches</u>              | - <u>Charles James Fox: Speeches During the French Revolutionary War Period.</u>   |
| H.M.C.,<br><u>Charlemont Papers</u>                 | - <u>Historical Manuscripts Commission,</u><br>- <u>The Manuscripts and Correspondence of James, First Earl of Charlemont.</u> |
| <u>Carlisle Papers</u>                              | - <u>Manuscripts of The Earl of Carlisle, Preserved at Castle Howard.</u>  |
| <u>Fortescue Papers</u>                             | - <u>Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue, Esq., Preserved at Dropmore.</u>   |
| Ilchester & Stavordale,<br><u>Lady Sarah Lennox</u> | - <u>Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox.</u>  |
| Lascelles, <u>Fox</u>                               | - <u>The Life of Charles James Fox</u>   |
| Lecky, <u>History of England</u>                    | - <u>History of England in the Eighteenth Century.</u>   |
| May, <u>Constitutional History</u>                  | - <u>Constitutional History of England Since the Accession of George III.</u>  |
| Moritz, <u>Travels</u>                              | - <u>Travels of Karl Philipp Moritz in England in 1782.</u>  |
| Parès, <u>George III</u>                            | - <u>King George III And The Politicians.</u>  |
| <u>Parliamentary Debates</u>                        | - <u>Parliamentary Register or History, Debates and Proceedings of Both Houses of Parliament.</u>                              |
| Robertson, <u>History</u>                           | - <u>England Under the Hanoverians.</u>  |





- Russell, Life and Times - Life and Times of Charles James Fox.
- Russell, Memorials - Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox.
- Sydney, England in the Eighteenth Century - England and the English in the Eighteenth Century.
- Townbee, Walpole Letters- Letters of Horace Walpole.
- Trevelyan, Early History- Early History of Charles James Fox.
- Wraxall, Memoirs - Historical Memoirs of My Own Time.
- Wright, Caricature History - Caricature History of the Georges.
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Note:

- (1) Each Annual Register is divided into two sections, one giving a general account of events in England and Europe during the year and the second including a day to day account of local happenings in England (the Chronicle) as well as important state papers, etc. Hence in footnotes citing the Annual Register, if the reference is to the second section of the book, the page number is followed by (Chron.) or (State Papers).
- (2) The Eighteenth Century Parliamentary Debates were published in several series with the result that there is a repetition of volume numbers in the period covered by this study. To avoid confusion the Parliamentary Debates listed herein follow the numbers of the bound set in the library of the University of Alberta.



SECTION I

THE MAN OF 1792.



## Chapter 1

### FOX, THE MAN

The debate in the British House of Commons on the last day of April, 1792, was a heated one. The issue was a notice of motion by the young Whig, Charles Grey, to the effect that he would make a formal resolution for a reform of parliament during the next session. It was not a cause designed to arouse general enthusiasm, for the French Revolution was almost three years old and events across the Channel had swung the sympathy of many to the views of the head of the ministry, the younger Pitt. It is recorded that Pitt spoke with unusual warmth that day, arguing that the present was an improper time for reform. He accused some of deeper designs than reform; of subversion of the constitution itself,<sup>1</sup> The accusation brought to his feet a well-known figure. Pitt's remarks had been directed at the recently formed reform society, The Friends of the People, to which several prominent Whigs belonged. The man who answered Pitt was not one of them, but neither was he a man to see his friends or his principles maligned. The members of The Friends of the People, declared Charles James Fox, were as respectable as any that supported the ministry which included those who, worse than republicans, adhered to arbitrary power.<sup>2</sup> These men were the authors of constitutional innovation.

It was not sympathy for the views of this outspoken adherent of the French Revolution and reform that kept the attention of the House. Nor was it respect for the chief spokesman of the Opposition. It was respect for Charles Fox, the man, that held the attention of the House.

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1. Annual Register, a view of History, Politics and Literature for the year 1792 (London, 1799), 164.
  2. Ibid., 1792, 164.





Corpulent from an early age, slovenly dressed and probably dirty, with a swarthy cast to his features, he was still described as not ill-looking and having marks of sagacity and fire in his eyes.<sup>3</sup> He had "a sort of majesty, from the addition of two black and shaggy eyebrows, which sometimes concealed, but oftener developed,<sup>4</sup> the workings of his mind." His smile was irresistible but his figure seemed destitute of elegance or grace, except when he was speaking.<sup>5</sup> His stance, with his right hand raised for emphasis or thumping the speaker's table if he was close to it,<sup>6</sup> the power and sincerity of his oratory as the words tumbled forth, were familiar to all, for at forty-three Charles Fox had sat in the House of Commons for more than twenty years.

Fox was presented with a seat at nineteen and his first speeches a few months later won high praise.<sup>7</sup> At twenty-one he was made a Lord of the Admiralty and Horace Walpole rated him as "one of our best speakers".<sup>8</sup> His rise was phenomenal, but not beyond expectation. Fox was evidently a precocious child. At seven he was making his own decisions regarding his education.<sup>9</sup> At Oxford his tutor sanctioned a trip to Paris on the ground that "Application like yours requires some intermission".<sup>10</sup> He had an excellent reading and writing knowledge of European languages

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3. Carl Philipp Moritz, The Travels of Carl Philipp Moritz in England in 1782 (London, 1924), 57; George Otto Trevelyan, George III and Charles James Fox (London & New York, 1912-14), I, 42.
  4. Nathaniel William Wraxall, Historical Memoirs of My Own Time (London, 1904), 338.
  5. Ibid., 338.
  6. Thomas Wright, Caricature History of the Georges (London, 1904), 167, 168; Moritz, op. cit., 56.
  7. Lord John Russell, Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox (Philadelphia, 1853), I, 62-64.
  8. Mrs. Paget Toynbee, Letters of Horace Walpole (Oxford, 1904-05), VII, 366.
  9. Russell, op. cit., I, 43.
  10. Ibid., I, 41.



and a deep interest in literature that lasted all his life.<sup>11</sup>  
With such attributes, his life should have been one long road of glory, yet there were other sides to his character which make it surprising that he had survived at all politically, let alone retained prominence in the eyes of his countrymen, in 1792.

Henry Fox, Lord Holland, was an indulgent father determined<sup>12</sup> that nothing should be done to break the spirit of his son. Whether or not his attitude was responsible, the younger Fox never showed a lack of spirit in his political and personal ups-and-downs. After his dismissal by the Tories in 1774, his resignation from the Shelburne cabinet and his disastrous defeat at the hands of Pitt in 1784, he always managed to regain or retain his position. The same fatherly indulgence may have sown the seeds of an impetuosity and lack of self-restraint that seemed to characterize the public life of Charles Fox: in the struggle with Pitt after the dismissal of the coalition; in the Regency Affair of 1789; and in the defence of the French revolutionists. Certainly it was evident in his passion for gambling.

Trevelyan describes the society of the period as "one vast<sup>13</sup> casino." It is unlikely that Fox, a convivial man, would have withstood the pressure of such a society although his father is generally blamed for introducing him to gaming at the tender age of fourteen. Even his contemporaries did not quite approve, for it is said that at Eton Charles's habits had a disastrous effect

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11. Many of Fox's letters to his nephew are chiefly discussions of literature. Those of Gibbon Wakefield are exclusively so.
  12. Russell, Memorials, I, 29ff.
  13. George Otto Trevelyan, Early History of Charles James Fox (London, 1881), 11; Marjorie Villiers, The Grand Whiggery (London, 1939), passim. This picture of the Eighteenth Century illustrates Trevelyan's point.

and a large amount in the same way.

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upon the whole school. His lack of appreciation for the value of money, a love of excitement and a restless drive that had pushed him through his studies, combined to lose him the financial security that even a younger son of a wealthy family could expect. When Fox was twenty-four his debts, amounting to about £ 140,000, were paid by his father, yet by 1781 he was again in such dire financial straits that his personal library had to be sold.<sup>15</sup> It was not that he gamed more than others, but that he lost more, and the debts he contracted not only burdened him for life, but involved his friends.<sup>16</sup> The betting book at Almack's (Brooke's) shows the frequency and lavishness of his private wagers as well as a view of the opinions of his friends. One item notes, that, "Lord Clermont has given Mr. Crawford 10 gs., upon the condition of receiving £500 from him whenever Mr. Charles Fox shall be worth £ 100,000 clear of debts."<sup>17</sup> Mr. Crawford evidently felt quite secure.<sup>18</sup>

Fox's dissipation did not directly affect his political career.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, he shone despite it, or perhaps rose above it. However, it was an essential side of his character and until his friends paid his debts in 1793, it left his finances in such a precarious position that his political motives were open to question. Although a desire for place to satisfy pecuniary needs was not uncommon, his political enemies did not fail, on more than one occasion, to connect his need of money with his denunciation of the existing administration.<sup>20</sup>

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14. Trevelyan, Early History, 61.

15. Russell, Memorials, I, 216.

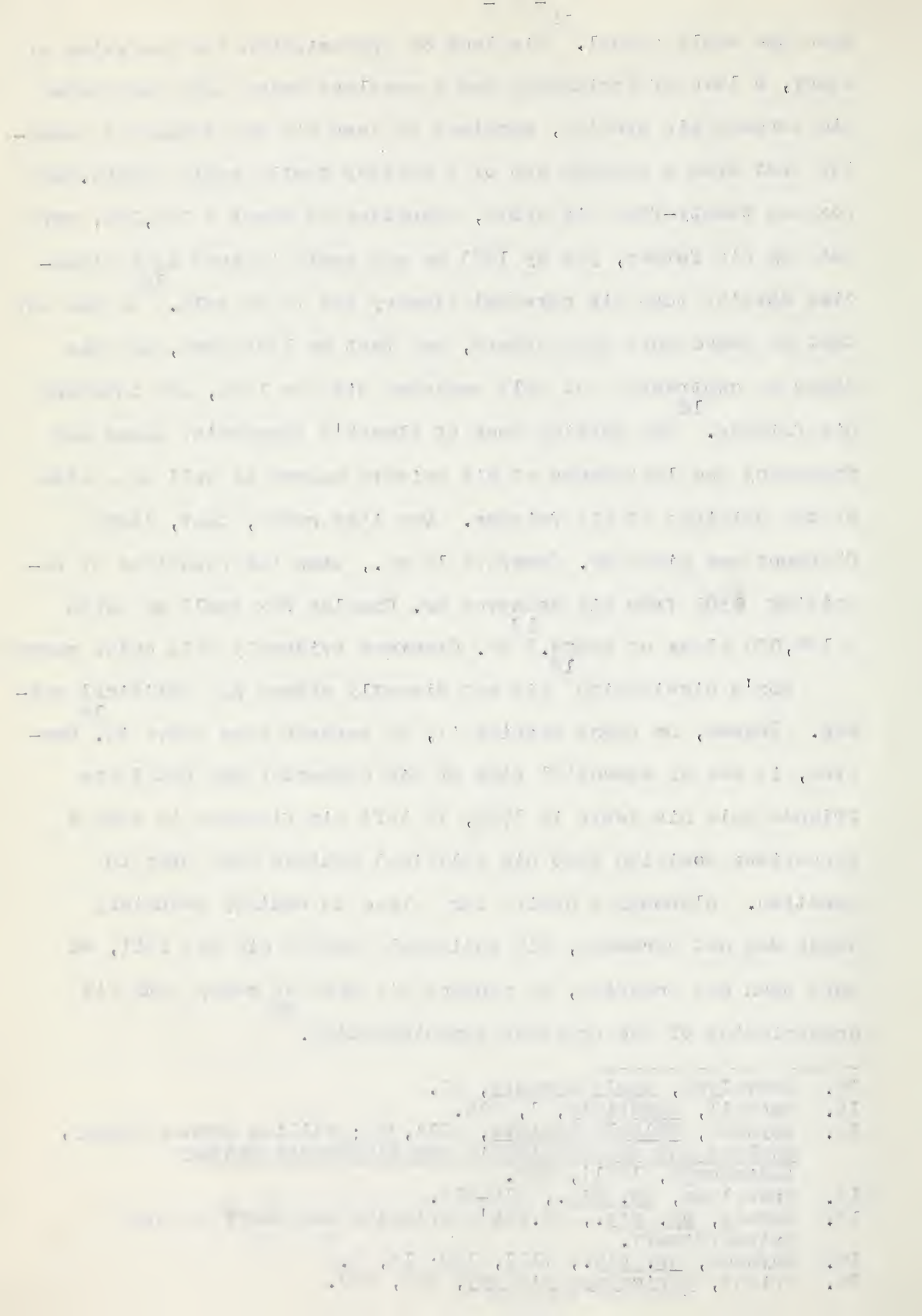
16. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, Vlll, 307; William Connor Sydney, England and the English in the Eighteenth Century (Edinburgh, 1891), 230.

17. Trevelyan, op. cit., 510-512.

18. Sydney, op. cit., 56. Fox's drinking was heavy but not extraordinary.

19. Toynbee, op. cit., Vlll, 157; IX, 4.

20. Wright, Caricature History, 352, 387.





Fox has been criticized for his insensibility to his faults. He was certainly casual about his gambling losses. Walpole tells of calling upon him one day in 1781 to find the creditors taking away the furniture. On returning home he came upon Fox at his doorstep, ready to talk of a forthcoming bill and oblivious of the fact that he was just then losing his possessions.<sup>21</sup> However, Fox was not completely insensible to the sorrow his habits caused his parents<sup>22</sup> and in 1775 openly confessed the vices with which he had been taunted in parliament and expressed the wish that he could atone for them.<sup>23</sup>

While many of his faults were those of his age, the virtues of Charles Fox were peculiarly his own. He was a man with a zest for life, and possibly this was the basis for both vices and virtues. He loved the excitement of gambling just as he loved the excitement of the House.<sup>24</sup> For many years he seemed determined to cram all the life he could into each twenty-four hours. Literature, sports, politics and gambling - all seemed to take a major part of his interest. This enjoyment of all sides of life and the people who made it was probably responsible for Fox's famed charm. The warm-heartedness that the father showed only to his family was shown by the son to all the world. Fox's contemporaries recorded the warmth, sincerity, and honesty that added lustre to his life and seep through the pages of one hundred and fifty years.

How many men could gain an opponent in a duel for a life-long friend?<sup>25</sup> He had the respect and friendship of Dr. Johnson though

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21. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XI, 3.
  22. George Otto Trevelyan, The American Revolution (London & New York, 1908), I, Appendix II. A letter from Fox to his Mother.
  23. Toynbee, op. cit., IX, 299n.
  24. Russell, Memorials, I, 147.
  25. Trevelyan, George III, II, 241, 242.



they held opposing political views.<sup>26</sup> In 1788, after Fox had been through many political and personal vicissitudes, Edward Gibbon wrote that he admired not only Fox's superior powers, but his simplicity and freedom from "the taint of malevolence, vanity, or falsehood," and he retained this admiration although they were violently opposed on the French Revolution.<sup>27</sup> George Selwyn admitted that Fox had no malice or rancour, but added that neither did he have feeling for anyone but himself.<sup>28</sup> There was some basis for the acidity of the comment as Fox was in debt to their mutual friend Lord Carlisle, but Selwyn was as aware as anyone of Charles Fox's warmth and charm.<sup>29</sup> Horace Walpole, who had no great love for Lord Holland, early admired the son's abilities while he disparaged his faults, and in time became his warm supporter.<sup>30</sup>

When his political opponents estimated him so highly, one can imagine the opinion of his family and friends. Lady Sarah Lennox, an aunt who was nearly his own age, considered that Charles had good qualities enough to atone for a thousand faults.<sup>31</sup> The affection of his friends was shown in a material manner when they bought most of his library, which was being sold for debts, and returned it to him.<sup>32</sup> In 1793 they collected funds to pay his debts. Fox gathered this faithful following early in life, for during the American War Selwyn remarked on the incense burned to Fox at Brooks's,<sup>33</sup> and on another occasion, of Fox and a mob of boys at

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26. James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson (New York), 1106.
  27. Edward Gibbon, Memoirs (London, 1891), 186.
  28. Historical Manuscripts Commission, Manuscripts of the Earl of Carlisle, Preserved at Castle Howard (London, 1897), 591.
  29. Ibid., 267, 507.
  30. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, Vlll, 370, 385; Xll, 3, 218; Xlll, 44, 86, 87.
  31. Countess Ilchester and Lord Stavordale, Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox (London, 1901-02), II, 41.
  32. Trevelyan, George III, I, 59, 60.
  33. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 537.





Brooks's talking treason. As early as 1774 Selwyn had remarked on the people who thought it necessary that Fox be the first man in the country.<sup>35</sup> The loyalty of what was known as the Devonshire House crowd was such that in 1783 they swung around and justified Fox's coalition with the lately maligned Lord North and during the hotly contested election of the next year, when many Whigs became "Fox's Martyres," the Duchesses of Devonshire and Bessborough canvassed Westminster for him - an unheard-of proceeding for highborn ladies, and one which raised scurrilous comment.<sup>36</sup> The supreme test came with the French Revolution when even party ties were not strong enough to withstand disagreement. Such long-standing friends as the Duke of Portland and Edmund Burke split with Fox and joined the government, yet even with his outspoken and unpopular championship of events in France, Fox retained a faithful band of followers. These men must have stayed through personal loyalty and belief in Fox and his views, for they had much to lose by opposition.

It was fitting that in 1792, a year that was crucial in his political life, Charles Fox should choose to defend his friends. He, too, possessed loyalty, although in cases such as that of the Prince of Wales, he might have been better without it. He prized friendship, rating it high "among the goods of life."<sup>37</sup> At the same time he had a strong sense of justice and fair play.<sup>38</sup> Fox always maintained that he was a "bad hater." In one respect he was, for as one of his biographers irreverently points out, he hated the wrong people.<sup>39</sup> Fox is, generally considered, and he no doubt was,

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34. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 583

35. Ibid., 264

36. Villiers, Grand Whiggery, 68, 69; Wright, Caricature History, 395.

37. Russell, Memorials, I, 145.

38. Ibid., I, 152; II, 124, 125.

39. Christopher Hobhouse, Fox (London, 1947), 135.





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a magnanimous person. He and Lord North were on excellent terms though they had every reason to be enemies. On the other hand, Fox long despised Lord Shelburne and he certainly came to hate Pitt, both men with whom he had much in common. His enmity with the latter seemed to bring out the worst in both men: on Pitt's side the pettiness of the Westminster Scrutiny and the Privy Council affair of 1798; on Fox's side an obstinate blindness to Pitt's worth.<sup>41</sup>

Even with his great abilities and his popularity with fashionable society, it is unlikely that Fox could have retained his hold on parliament throughout his spotted career without his powerful oratory. He commanded attention in his early days when his dogmatic Toryism embarrassed the Tory ministry as much as it annoyed the Whigs.<sup>42</sup> In fact his early fame was such that Walpole made a special visit to parliament to hear him, and later declared that "Charles Fox has tumbled old Saturn [Chatham] from the throne of oratory, and if he has not all the dazzling lustre, has much more of the solid materials."<sup>43</sup> He apparently lacked Burke's wealth of language but his arguments were logical and shrewd, delivered with a force that commanded attention. A German pastor visiting parliament in 1782 wrote that, "It is impossible for me to describe, with what fire, and persuasive eloquence he spoke," and went on to tell of the Speaker nodding his head in approbation from time to time, and how, every time Fox attempted to stop, the members cried,<sup>44</sup> "Go on."

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40. Gibbon Wakefield declared, "No man...was ever less obnoxious." (Russell, Memorials, IV, 336.)  
 41. Russell, op.cit., III, 279-280; IV, 75.  
 42. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, VII, 26.  
 43. Ibid., X, 182.  
 44. Moritz, Travels, 56.



Speaking rapidly, he plunged into the middle of his sentences. Despite "some unpleasing shrillness, unharmonious cadences, and occasional screams beyond the scope of his organ, he possessed the faculty of touching the heart by his voice."<sup>45</sup>

Fox spoke frequently and apparently enjoyed the rigours of debate for he said that he liked the House itself though he hated the preparatory work.<sup>46</sup> However, once in office he proved that he could be as painstaking there as he had been formerly at play and at university. When he gained his first important post as Secretary of State in the Rockingham ministry of 1782, Walpole reports that he shone as greatly in place as he had in opposition.<sup>47</sup> Even Selwyn admitted that Fox was assiduous in office.<sup>48</sup> While still a youth Fox had expressed a fear that through idleness he would never be anything but "a lounging fellow",<sup>49</sup> and his mother had had the same fear.<sup>50</sup> Idle he certainly was, but he had his own ideas of duty and he was not above chiding his friends for a neglect of parliamentary responsibility.<sup>51</sup> In office he evidently gave himself up to his duties for a friend reported that he seldom looked in at Brooke's, to the disappointment of many who had paid up arrears to enjoy the society of a minister.<sup>52</sup> His attention to business was sometimes the despair of his relatives, for Fox was far too occupied to be concerned with gaining favor for them.<sup>53</sup> "Void of art

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45. Russell, Memorials, I, 48.

46. Ibid., I, 147.

47. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XII, 244, 245.

48. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 623.

49. Russell, op. cit., I, 55.

50. Brian Fitzgerald, Correspondence of the Duchess of Leinster (Dublin, 1939), 538.

51. Russell, op. cit., I, 225-26.

52. Ibid., I, 260.

53. Ilchester & Stavordale, Lady Sarah Lennox, II, 37, 205.





or design," said Walpole, "if nature had not made him the most powerful reasoner of the age, he would never have distinguished himself; he never stooped to the manoeuvres of a politician."<sup>54</sup>

While his friendship with Fox was broken by the French Revolution, Burke's assessment is worthy of note. He declared that although Fox was a man with faults, "they are faults that...have nothing in them to extinguish the fire of great virtues. In those faults there is no mixture of deceit or of hypocrisy, or want of feeling for the distresses of mankind."<sup>55</sup>

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54. Russell, Memorials, II, 82.

55. Parliamentary History, December 1st, 1783, requoted from Trevelyan, George III, II, 346.





FOX, THE POPULACE, AND THE KING

While Charles Fox had the love and admiration of his friends and at least the respect of his parliamentary opponents, his reputation with the general public swung pendulum-like from high to low. Fox was never a democrat and as the times did not demand today's attention to public opinion, there is little likelihood that he attached much importance to popularity as far as politics were concerned. At one point he did remark that he felt strongly any marks of public approbation, but he qualified it by adding, "from those with whom I have lived in friendship in private."<sup>1</sup> However, he did dislike abuse,<sup>2</sup> and owned that he was mortified by the loss of his popularity,<sup>3</sup> although he cannot be accused of courting public favor. Certainly during his early career he made no attempt to conciliate a public irate over his parliamentary policies. By the time he had been a member for two years his already corpulent figure<sup>4</sup> was a target for the caricaturists of the day. Selwyn reports that Fox never cared what people thought of his person.<sup>5</sup> It was fortunate he did not, for his face and figure lent themselves admirably to that form of art, and his politics ensured him a life-long interest as a subject. However, the young Charles Fox was a target for more than the caricaturists. According to Walpole he abused the City as if impatient to inherit his father's unpopularity.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Russell, Memorials, II, 183.

2. Ibid., II, 178.

3. History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons and House of Lords (London, 1802) LIII, 103.

4. Wright, Caricature History, 319.

5. H.M.C. Carlisle Papers, 506.

6. Russell, op.cit., I, 75.

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The populace in turn actually dragged him from his carriage on one occasion, and he escaped from the mob with difficulty.<sup>7</sup> It must have been a strange contrast to see the enthusiasm when, in 1780 he became the candidate for Westminster, one of the few popularly elected ridings.<sup>8</sup> Between 1770 and 1780, Fox had not only exchanged the Tory for the Whig principles, but had become one of the main figures of the opposition.<sup>9</sup> His championship of the American cause won him many friends, and when he defeated the government candidate in the election of 1780, he was carried in triumph through London.<sup>10</sup>

The following years saw Charles Fox reach the height of his popularity with the "ordinary" man. The German pastor, Carl Philipp Moritz, declared that Charles Fox was loved by the people, and he described the contagious enthusiasm of the crowd at Westminster shouting "Fox! Fox!" during the election of a fellow member, Sir Cecil Wray.<sup>11</sup> The sudden end to this adoration was brought about by Fox himself. He resigned precipitately from the Rockingham-Shelburne ministry and a few months later gained violent abuse from all sides by his junction with Lord North whom he had so recently and with such vehemence denounced.<sup>12</sup> The caricaturists outdid themselves - in one instance showing Lord North painting Fox's swarthy features white while declaring, "I have found him a warm friend, a fair though formidable adversary."<sup>13</sup> There was soon

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7. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, VI, 25.

8. Russell, Memorials, I, 199; Toynbee, op. cit., XI, 125.

9. Wraxall claims the negligent appearance of Fox and his friends during these years first threw discredit on "dress" (Wraxall, Memoirs, 83).

10. Russell, op. cit., I, 211, 212.

11. Moritz, Travels, 57, 63-64.

12. Russell, op. cit., II, 35-36, 38; Toynbee, op. cit., XI, 419.

13. Wright, Caricature History, 368.





another opportunity for abuse with the coalition's introduction of a bill to change the system of government for India. Private interests and parliamentary opposition had much to do with the original outcry, but the caricaturists fanned the belief that Fox was aiming at personal power. Fox himself believed that the bill received its most damaging blow in the eyes of the public from a now famous cartoon, "Carlo Khan's Triumphant Entry into Leadenhall Street," which depicted Fox astride an elephant (Lord North), and heralded by Burke as they arrived at the door of India House. It must have been effective for Pitt later rewarded the author.<sup>14</sup>

While Fox gained some approval by his attempted measures for India,<sup>15</sup> his struggle with Pitt after the dismissal of the Fox-North ministry finished any remaining popularity of that coalition, although Fox retained much of his personal following in Westminster.<sup>16</sup> However, it was by no means unanimous. It was reported that a saddler in Haymarket, when canvassed by Fox during the 1784 election, produced a halter and declared himself ready to oblige. Fox retorted, "I return you my thanks, my friend, for your intended present; but I should be sorry to deprive you of it, as I presume it must be a family piece."<sup>17</sup> Despite his levity Fox must have been dispirited by the denunciations heaped upon him, for he had previously admitted that he disliked abuse.<sup>18</sup> Lord Russell claimed that the coalition and its aftermath deprived Fox of popular support and weakened his influence for the remainder of his life.<sup>19</sup> Certainly it was still remembered in 1790.<sup>20</sup>

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14. Wright, Caricature History, 373

15. Ilchester & Stavordale, Lady Sarah Lennox, II, 42-44.

16. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XLIII, 141.

17. Wright, op.cit., 396n.

18. Russell, Memorials, II, 178.

19. Ibid., II, 90.

20. Toynbee, op.cit., XLV, 252.





Although he never again reached the heights of 1782, Fox did regain some of the ground he had lost in the estimation of some of the public during the years before 1790. However, it was popularity with special classes rather than with the general public, although Pitt's action in forcing a scrutiny of the Westminster election in 1784 which could have kept Fox out of parliament, gained popular sympathy for the Whig leader. Pitt's Irish commercial bills of 1785 were also unpopular with the manufacturers and Fox's opposition to them brought - to his delight - the acclamation of Manchester. In Ireland, indignation against Fox was reported to have been universal, but the claim may have been exaggerated by a prejudiced witness. In 1788 the Regency dispute brought another violent division of opinion. Many saw it for what it was, a personal struggle between Pitt and Fox, and approved or disapproved accordingly, although generally opinion was against Fox. By 1789, another group, the dissenters, were beginning to look upon him with more favor. It was not an unmixed blessing, for the growing ferocity of the French Revolution soon turned many against any sign of liberalism and the caricaturists excited popular prejudice by linking revolutionaries, dissenters, Whigs, and Fox. Popularity was Fox's for the last time when he protested loudly, and with success, Pitt's handling of the Oczakow negotiations with Russia in 1791. In the same year he was presented with the freedom of

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21. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XlII, 253, 312.

22. Russell, Memorials, II, 221, 222.

23. Historical Manuscripts Commission, Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue, Esq., Preserved at Dropmore (London, 1892), I, 247.

24. Ibid., I, 385; William Edward Hartpole Lecky, History of England in the Eighteenth Century, V, 451; H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 659.

25. Russell, op. cit., II, 296.

26. Wright, Caricature History, 457, 458.

27. Lecky, op. cit., VI, 168, 171; Lord John Russell, Life and Times of Charles James Fox (London, 1859), II, 205.



the City of York "in token of his brilliant and unrivalled abilities in support of the British Constitution...of the just rights of every degree of citizen, and the peace, liberty and happiness of mankind."<sup>28</sup> Until the outbreak of war in 1793 probably much of the public felt with George III's daughter Princess Amelia, "That Fox may be a rogue, I know nothing of that; all I know is that he is a great man."<sup>29</sup> It was a sentiment, however, that was not shared by her royal father.

Pares states that George III never had a greater personal enemy than Charles Fox.<sup>30</sup> There is certainly truth in the statement, but enmity works both ways and Fox, on the other hand, never had a greater personal enemy than George III. The constitutional aspect of the conflict will be dealt with in a later chapter, but there was more than that to the relationship of these two powerful men. Pares' use of the term "personal enemy" is apt, for the feeling between Fox and the king became the bitter, personal hatred that sometimes underlies political opposition.

The king disliked Charles Fox from the beginning. It is unlikely that his distaste stemmed entirely from Fox's loose living, for although George III was scrupulous in his personal affairs, he was not prudish about the morals of his political followers. Probably the antipathy arose because Fox upheld policies from his own convictions rather than for the more acceptable reason of the king's approval.<sup>31</sup> Fox had not been long in parliament when he drew the ire

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28. Edward Lascelles, The Life of Charles James Fox (London, 1936) 230.  
29. Ilchester & Stavordale, Lady Sarah Lennox, II, 42.  
30. Richard Pares, King George III And The Politicians (Oxford, 1953), 120.  
31. Trevelyan, Early History, 552.





of the king by putting Lord North in an awkward position. George III declared, with justice, that Fox's conduct was not from conscience but from an aversion to all restraint.<sup>32</sup> It was the first, but not the last time that Fox's independent attitude cost him his office. Nor did George III forget Fox's opposition to the Royal Marriage Bill which the king had instituted.<sup>33</sup> The opposition of Fox must have been even more than annoying, for although he sneered at him, George III did not underestimate Fox's ability. In 1776 he instructed Lord North to bring up as much business as possible while Fox was in Paris and "the Attention of the House is not taken up by noisy declamations."<sup>34</sup>

The opinion Charles Fox had of the king held as little promise. It is unlikely he ever had much reverence for the monarchy as his father had been disappointed in the honours he felt his due, and his aunt, Lady Sarah Lennox, had been courted by George III until his mother, the queen, and Lord Bute discovered the affair and he was quickly married to a German princess. At any rate, Fox's political views soon led him to personal opposition, for in his hostility to the American War he was opposing the personal policy of the king.<sup>35</sup> By 1781 his opposition to George III was violent. He found it "intolerable to think that it should be in the power of one blockhead to do so much mischief."<sup>36</sup> Such an opinion was hardly a respectful attitude toward one's monarch, and there is no doubt that Fox had little respect for the king. George Selwyn reports that he was fond of comparing the king to Satan while he adopted

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32. Sir John Fortescue, The Correspondence of King George The Third from 1760 to December, 1783 (London, 1927), III, 69-70; Russell, Memorials, I, 95-96.

33. Ibid., I, 90.

34. Fortescue, op.cit., III, 402.

35. Russell, op.cit., I, 171.

36. Ibid., I, 217.





all the supremacy he claimed to dread in his sovereign, and that his only grievance was in not being able to govern the king and country.<sup>38</sup> One may suspect Selwyn of exaggeration, but Fox's attitude was arrogant and was obviously resented, for George III spoke only of Fox's desire for lucrative offices.<sup>39</sup> His dislike was such that by 1782 Fox was ignored at Court levees and the king was reported to be determined to exclude him from the government.<sup>40</sup> Despite this avowal, Fox became a Secretary of State in the Rockingham ministry when it was formed less than a month later, in March, 1782. To Fox, the change to a Whig government seemed tantamount to a change in the constitution,<sup>41</sup> for with the fall of the North ministry he considered George III's attempt at personal government to be at an end. The king, very naturally, did not accept his defeat gracefully. He had little use for the Whigs. His dislike of Rockingham was evident.<sup>42</sup> To Fox, his letters on the affairs of state were brief and businesslike,<sup>43</sup> but in letters to Shelburne he showed that his dislike of Fox overflowed into disapproval of Fox's foreign policies.<sup>44</sup> This attitude was unfortunate for Fox because he and Shelburne were mutually jealous over the conduct of the negotiations for peace and without co-operation between them, one was bound to lose out. By a combination of circumstances and Fox's own actions, Fox was the one to go.

Shelburne had conducted the original negotiations which

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37. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 599.

38. Ibid., 55.

39. Fortescue, George III, IV, 345; Russell, Memorials, I, 207.

40. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 586, 592.

41. Ibid., Introduction, XXI.

42. Fortescue, op. cit., V, 443ff.

43. Ibid., V, 445, 455, 456.

44. Ibid., VI, 10, 21.



brought the Rockingham Whigs to power and though Rockingham was titular head of the ministry, Shelburne was in a privileged position. He soon gained the esteem and the confidence of the <sup>45</sup>king. By the end of June, 1782, it was evident that Lord Rockingham was dying, and the attitudes of George III and Shelburne took on the aspect of a conspiracy to get rid of Fox, although the king wrote that they might not find it necessary to remove <sup>46</sup>him at once. Fox solved the problem himself by resigning precipitately on Rockingham's death.

Neither Fox nor the king was under any illusion about the nature of the battle before them. It was a struggle for power, and a bitter, personal one. On July 13, 1782, the king wrote, not very grammatically, "the mask is now certainly cast off; it is no less than a struggle whether I am to be dictated to by Mr. Fox, who avows that he must have the sole direction of the country." <sup>47</sup> He had no intention of ever again having Fox as a minister, and admitted that "the contest is become personal and He indeed <sup>48</sup>sees it also in that point of view."

The king's <sup>49</sup>opinion had not changed by February, 1783. Indeed, Walpole cites as a further reason for George III's abhorrence of Fox, the friendship of the latter and the Prince of Wales, who was espousing the causes of the opposition. <sup>50</sup> However, circumstances had changed. With parliament divided into factions

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45. Fortescue, George III, V, 463, 464; VI, 10, 21.

46. Ibid., VI, 69, 70

47. Ibid., VI, 85

48. Ibid., VI, 97

49. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, I, 192.

50. Russell, Memorials, II, 57.





following Shelburne, North and Fox, it was obvious that some sort of a coalition would be formed. George III was outraged when Fox and North united to oust Shelburne from office.<sup>51</sup> When he finally called upon them and Fox kissed hands on taking office, reports claimed that the king turned back his ears and eyes like a horse determined to throw his rider.<sup>52</sup> As Pares notes, Fox seemed to have wanted to behave like a gentleman but the king did not reciprocate.<sup>53</sup> Others believed that had George III done so, Fox would have done much to comply with the king's wishes.<sup>54</sup> Fox, with ill-judged optimism, believed that the king was "neither pleased nor displeased",<sup>55</sup> and that he would take no action to rid himself of his ministers. That Fox was not fully aware of the depth of his sovereign's enmity seems impossible, but equally hard to believe is that his low estimation of George III would allow him to suppose that the king would play fair. Fox himself was usually magnanimous, so he may have considered his position strong enough for defiance. Despite Horace Walpole's report that George III did not like his ministers but would play no tricks upon them,<sup>56</sup> more than likely he had every intention of ousting them as soon as possible.<sup>57</sup> According to his remarks regarding Fox and the constitution, he felt he could lose a great deal with Fox in power.<sup>58</sup> That he used rigorous and unorthodox methods of ridding himself of his ministers is not surprising.

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51. Fortescue, George III, VI, 248, 257, 322; Russell, Memorials, II, 54, 56.  
52. Ibid., II, 45.  
53. Pares, George III, 125n; Russell, op. cit., II, 65.  
54. Wraxall, Memoirs, 566.  
55. Russell, Life and Times, II, 11.  
56. Russell, Memorials, II, 86.  
57. Russell, Life and Times, II, 12; H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, I, 215.  
58. Fortescue, op. cit., VI, 97.





If Fox had not been warned before, he knew with the fall of the coalition the lengths to which the king would go to keep him from power. Not just the round but almost the whole bout went to George III, for Fox did not again gain office until a few months before his death more than twenty years later. Even then the king had not changed his opinion.<sup>59</sup> The coalition of 1783 is often claimed as the cause of Fox's years in opposition. That Fox's stand against his successor, Pitt, was unpopular was shown in the election of 1784. Yet the coalition itself retained its parliamentary support until its dismissal, and as far as unpopularity is concerned, the public has a notoriously short memory in regard to politics. It is possible that had there been an alternative acceptable to the king, Pitt might have been out of office before the fury of the Revolutionary Wars swept England into a frenzy of patriotism and loyalty.<sup>60</sup> However, with the fall of the Fox-North coalition, the bad relationship between Fox and the king<sup>61</sup> became a permanent one. Behind the pattern woven by the people, the events, and the politics, stood the hatred these two men had for each other, and in those days the enmity of a king could still be the determining factor.

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59. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, VII, 338.

60. Pares claims that after 1788 Fox seemed to be the only alternative and both George III and Pitt were anxious to keep him out (Pares, George III, 181). In his biography, The Life of William, Earl of Shelburne (London, 1912, II, 372), Lord Fitzmaurice states that in 1791 it was thought that Pitt's Russian policy might force him from office, and that the king's objections to Fox might not be insuperable. This hardly seems likely in view of the past relationship and Fox's known support of the French Revolution. It was to Shelburne that the king applied in 1792, and even then it was not followed up (Ibid., II, 384).

61. In 1789 Selwyn stated that Fox was scarcely spoken to at court (H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 675).



THE GROWTH OF THE LIBERAL.

"The Court," Charles Fox wrote toward the end of his life, "without any invidious consideration of particular characters, is a miserable foundation to build a system of Liberty and Reform upon."<sup>1</sup> In his attitude toward the court Fox was consistent throughout his life, but he had not always felt concern for the questions of liberty and reform. His career was divided into two distinct and opposing phases. When he entered parliament Charles Fox had few political convictions of his own.<sup>2</sup> His father's prejudice against the Whigs, and sympathy for government policy over the Wilkes affair,<sup>3</sup> could not have encouraged liberal feeling, while Lady Holland was obviously pleased over her son's connection with Lord North.<sup>4</sup> In fact, far from being a liberal, the young Charles Fox was a Tory among Tories. One of his first speeches supported the expulsion of Wilkes from parliament, while another approved parliament's action in replacing Wilkes with Colonel Luttrell.<sup>5</sup> It was not his support of the government, or even the ingenuity with which he defended their actions, that made Fox notorious, but the violence and insolence with which he spoke and acted.<sup>6</sup> During a debate on an inquiry into criminal justice in 1770 he declared that the question should be allowed to return to the dirt from which it came.<sup>7</sup> If the House was to be "ever at the command of the vulgar and their capricious shouts and hisses,

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1. Russell, Memorials, III, 341, quoted in J.R.M. Butler, The Passing of the Great Reform Bill (London, 1914), 213.

2. Russell, Memorials, I, 48, 49.

3. Ibid., I, 64, 65, 67.

4. Ibid., I, 71n.

5. Ibid., I, 63.

6. Ibid., I, 63.

7. The Modern Orator (London, 1848), II, 5.







I cannot see what advantage the nation will reap from a representative body."<sup>8</sup>

This was only the beginning. As Trevelyan says, the young Fox seemed determined to discover how much unsound argument and dogmatism would be acceptable, and in the process he raged against nearly all the principles he later espoused.<sup>9</sup> His attitude toward any measure aimed at restoring a little of the prestige of parliament was more reactionary than that of many Tories: in 1771 he opposed a minor reform in the eligibility of parliamentary representatives;<sup>10</sup> in the same year he refused to condemn the voters of New Shoreham for corruption that horrified a corrupt Commons;<sup>11</sup> in 1770 he opposed the Grenville Election Bill aimed at improving the trials of contested elections by substituting a committee for the whole House, and in 1774 he abused an attempt to make the practices of the Grenville Bill a permanent feature of parliament.<sup>12</sup>

The outrageous stands were not limited to electoral matters. One of the outstanding instances of the early perversity of Charles Fox was the squabble over the Nullum Tempus Act by which Sir James Lowther sought to defraud the Duke of Portland of part of his holdings. When the question first arose, parliament passed a bill to protect landowners from claims of the crown - the basis Lowther had used to attack Portland's property. However, one clause of the new bill left a loophole and Sir James took advantage of it to renew his attack. In 1771 an attempt was made to end the matter by striking out the offending clause. The government cause does not

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8. The Modern Orator, II, 5.

9. Trevelyan, Early History, 356.

10. Parliamentary Debates, VI, 2.

11. Ibid., VI, 28, 129.

12. Ibid., VI, 48.



seem to have been well supported until Charles Fox rose to his feet. His silence to that time, declared this bright young man, had been due to his astonishment and then to his horror and indignation at the proposal to amend the bill. The amendment was a course which at one time destroyed constitution, liberty and laws.<sup>13</sup> He used the law and the rights of property as the basis of a passionate and brilliant defence in which he affected to be the plain man of good sense, but during which he displayed an intellectual agility that amazed and convinced. Fox may have given the great satisfaction to his party that Walpole claims,<sup>14</sup> but his speech illustrates, along with his extraordinary ability, his immaturity. The basic injustice to Portland was to him immaterial. Portland's only crime was that of being a Whig, and to Fox, that was crime enough. He had fought furiously with a lip service to liberalism that mocked the later man.

Probably the most notorious examples of Fox's early attitude can be found in his speeches and actions in matters regarding the liberty of the press. The first of these concerned a tangle that arose from an attempt by the House of Commons in 1771 to prevent the publication of the debates. The support given to the printers by the officials of the city of London resulted in a summons of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen before the House. The whole affair was a riotous display with Charles Fox in his element. When Alderman Oliver asked the charge, Fox thundered "What we shall move against the gentleman will depend upon what he shall say in

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13. Parliamentary Debates, VI, 48.

14. Russell, Memorials, I, 74.





his defence."<sup>15</sup> Later in the debate he stoutly maintained parliament's independence of the people, and claimed that he would not be "a rebel to my king, my country, or my own heart, for the loudest huzza of an inconsiderate multitude."<sup>16</sup> The inconsiderate<sup>17</sup> multitude thought as little of Fox as he did of it, and when it saw fit to handle him roughly, he blamed the sheriffs for being too lenient.<sup>18</sup> His attitude and volubility were such that the newspapers blamed his "indecent and most shocking behaviour" for the lengths<sup>19</sup> to which the populace carried its resentment. His language off-<sup>20</sup>ended even the more temperate of his own party.

Violence against the press, indeed, was the immediate cause of Fox's break with the Tories. In 1774 an attack on the speaker of the House was published by the printer, Woodfall. Most members, remembering the Lord Mayor's trial, were ready to drop the subject after the speaker had been mollified, but Fox obstreperously demanded that the printer be ordered to appear. Although he admitted that the action might have repercussions, he claimed that if any other course was taken, the printers would feel free to libel anyone.<sup>21</sup> When Woodfall appeared before the House, the members were again in a moderate mood, but Fox, against the wishes of the ministers, not only moved that the printer be committed to Newgate,<sup>22</sup> but forced Lord North to vote with him. Parliament, Fox

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15. Trevelyan, Early History, 414.

16. The Modern Orator, II, 11.

17. Russell, Memorials, I, 75.

18. Parliamentary Debates, VI, 113, 115.

19. Wright, Caricature History, 326.

20. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, VII, 26.

21. Parliamentary Debates, VII, 31.

22. Ibid., VII, 35; Russell, op. cit., I, 95, 96.





proclaimed, had not lost the confidence of the people by the Middlesex election, but by the tameness with which it had accepted insults to the sovereign and the House. The Aldermen and those people who presented remonstrances should be taken into custody.<sup>23</sup> George III was indignant, not so much at Fox's professions, as at his placing of Lord North in an awkward position. He declared what many must have thought: "that Young Man has so thoroughly cast off every principle of common honour and honesty that he must become as contemptible as he is odious."<sup>24</sup> On February 24, 1774, only a few days after the king's complaint, Fox was dismissed from the treasury.

There seems a strange contrast between the words and actions of these early years and those which sought to end the trade in slaves, which extolled the French Revolution as the dawn of liberty for that country, and endeavored to safeguard the liberty of Englishmen, but that contrast is less surprising when we consider the speeches and actions of Charles Fox in the light of his years. Fox was always violent on questions he considered important, but the violence of 1769 to 1774 was, at least in part, simply the natural violence of a brilliant young man. His speeches during the Nullum Tempus debate, during the trials of the Lord Mayor and Woodfall, his actions in regard to Lord North in the Woodfall debate, even his complaints about the mob, are not those of a mature person. When Sir William Meredith introduced a petition for reconsideration of subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles in 1772, Fox opposed the bill with the flippancy of youth: "Religion...was best understood when least talked of."<sup>25</sup> However, even at this time, there

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23. Parliamentary Debates, VII, 36.

24. Fortescue, George III, III, 69.

25. Russell, Memorials, I, 77.



were flashes of the man that was to come. While he opposed the petition against the Thirty-nine Articles, he also opposed subscript-<sup>26</sup> ion to the Articles by youths at the universities. A year later, in February 1773, he switched and supported a similar petition - though Lord North again opposed it - and once more spoke of the bad effect on youth of subscribing to something it does not under-

<sup>27</sup>stand. On other occasions, when party principles were not involved, Fox took an independent line. In fact, when Fox stood up to speak on a question, the ministry was never quite sure which side he would take. Although he had previously supported the claims of Lowther against the Duke of Portland's property, in February, 1772, he inconsistently favored a bill to secure the holders of former church property against claims of the

<sup>28</sup>church. In the same year he supported the enlargement of the

<sup>29</sup>Toleration Act. His opposition to the Royal Marriage Bill, which the king was determined to have approved, was partially <sup>30</sup>responsible for his first resignation from office in 1772.

Though Fox did not join the Whigs at this time, his sojourn out of office gave him an opportunity for independent thought without the necessity of supporting either government or opposition policy, and brought him into closer contact with Burke and other

<sup>31</sup>Whigs. Gibbon declared that "Charles Fox is commenced sic patriot, and is already attempting to pronounce the words country, <sup>32</sup>liberty, corruption." However, there was no startling change in

26. Russell, Memorials, I, 77; Parliamentary Debates, VI, 162, 166.

27. Ibid., VI, 453; Russell, op. cit., I, 92.

28. Parliamentary Debates, VI, 177.

29. Ralph Fell, Memoirs of the Public Life of Charles James Fox (London, 1808), I, 33.

30. Russell, op. cit., I, 77, 78.

31. Ibid., I, 90.

32. Gibbon, Memoirs, 337.







his attitude when he returned once more to the cabinet in December of 1772. While Lord North may not have approved Fox's attack on Clive in 1773,<sup>33</sup> Fox was still the supreme Tory over matters of the press and electoral reform.

However, with his second dismissal from the cabinet early in 1774, Fox began the second and the real phase of his career. He did not formally join the Whig party for some years, but his opposition to the North ministry began at once. It was violent and, no doubt, sheer factional conduct in some instances,<sup>34</sup> but there is little doubt that Fox was perfectly sincere in his stand on the American question. Lord Holland states that Fox's dismissal at this time (before the American War began) was fortunate for his political career, as it saved him from becoming involved in defending the government on its American policy and allowed him to judge the question involved in the quarrel without being bound by the shackles of office.<sup>35</sup> However, there is reason to doubt that Fox on the treasury bench would have supported coercion of America. He does not appear to have taken any active part in defending the government's American policy while he was in office. More than likely he would have resigned rather than support Lord North and the king in the suppression of America. The silence of Fox on the subject before his dismissal from the cabinet gains significance when one considers his volubility on every other subject. Any parental influence on the part of the first Lord Holland would have supported a stand on the American side, for he did not approve of taxing the colonies.<sup>36</sup> Certainly Fox's letters and speeches during the war years give every evidence of sincerity for the

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33. Russell, Memorials, I, 92.

34. Ibid., I, 122.

35. Ibid., I, 113.

36. Ibid., I, 113, 114.

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American cause. Furthermore, Fox must have realized that he was taking what was, for several years, a most unpopular stand, while he could have gained public esteem by supporting Lord North and the king.<sup>37</sup> He must have given thought to the American situation as it became more serious for not long after his dismissal he was opposing the measures of the government on a sound and liberal basis. In March 1774, he objected to some clauses in the Boston customs bill.<sup>38</sup> In April, he gave his first vote to the Rockingham party on a motion to repeal the tea duty. If the government persisted, Fox prophesied, they would force America into open rebellion.<sup>39</sup> During debates on the administration of justice and civil government for Massachusetts, he declared, "Whoever would govern a country without its consent, insured resistance."<sup>40</sup> Parliament, he said, had no more right to tax America than Ireland. The Americans<sup>41</sup> had a right to the same legal safeguards as the English.

By 1775 Fox's course was set. He had not become the complete liberal overnight, for at that time he still supported parliament's action in the expulsion of Wilkes, and was as yet unready for the slightest electoral reform,<sup>42</sup> but in most cases he followed the path of opposition.<sup>43</sup> When Rockingham and many of his followers seceded from parliament, deeming opposition useless, Fox was one

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37. In his History of England in the Eighteenth Century (IV, 333-336), Lecky gives an excellent breakdown of the attitudes in England toward the Americans.

38. Parliamentary Debates, VII, 92, 94.

39. Ibid., VII, 175.

40. Russell, Memorials, I, 123.

41. Parliamentary Debates, VII, 227, 233.

42. Ibid., VIII, 234, 325.

43. Russell, op. cit., I, 125.

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of those who remained to oppose the ministry. He fought the suspension of Habeas Corpus in America as he was later to fight its suspension in England.<sup>44</sup> He not only believed that the cause of the government was indefensible,<sup>45</sup> but was convinced that, should America be defeated, the cause of liberalism in England would be dead.<sup>46</sup>

The years of the American War were the years that brought Fox to maturity, and the liberal views he espoused were confirmed in his dealings with Ireland during his terms as Foreign Secretary in 1782 and 1783. In April, 1782, he wrote that he wished to settled Irish affairs to the satisfaction of both countries, to gain as close a connection as possible, but a connection that admitted liberty as befitting "one who professes to hold the natural rights of mankind far more sacred than any local prejudices."<sup>47</sup> Fox favored giving the Irish all they asked for consistent with ensuring England against further demands and disputes. He, too, had learned a lesson from America; he wanted a clear understanding of what could be expected from Ireland for the protection given her.<sup>48</sup> However, while Fox felt that Ireland should be treated with justice, and his views were generally conciliatory, he refused to carry conciliation to dangerous lengths and dealt firmly with the Irish Volunteers when they attempted to intimidate both the English and Irish parliaments in November, 1783. Ample concessions had been made the previous year, he said, and further conciliation would make the Volunteers the only government in Ireland.<sup>49</sup>

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44. Russell, Memorials, I, 136, 143.

45. Ibid., I, 146.

46. Ibid., I, 128; World Famous Orations (New York and London, 1906), IV, 29.

47. Russell, op. cit., I, 319.

48. Ibid., I, 320, 321.

49. Russell, Life and Times, II, 16, 17.





Fox's views on the problem of the government of India were similar to those he held on Ireland in his desire to institute a control that was both just and liberal. However, his motives in changing the government of India were suspected by many of being founded on selfish interests: to gain power for the coalition ministry. India had always been a rich field for patronage and the bill introduced by Fox did change the system of government in such a way that without proper safeguards the coalition ministry stood to gain a considerable amount of power. Under the new measure, the board of control was nominated by the government for the first four-year term, and it was obvious that it could exercise a patronage equal to that of the court. To make matters worse the bill, introduced by the controversial coalition, became a party question. Lord North was more sagacious than Fox for he warned that the measure would be considered as a question of party influence versus the crown and the people. Fox was aware that the measures he proposed were strong ones and involved some risks, and although he was concerned, he was not really alarmed over the furor his India Bill created. He could not have believed that he was risking the life of the government, for at that time the defeat of a government did not necessarily mean the defeat of the ministry. Furthermore, if he had thought that there was any risk of the government falling, it is unlikely that he would have pressed the bill through the Commons as he was well aware that only success could justify his coalition with North.

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50. Russell, Memorials, II, 95.

51. Russell, Life and Times, II, 30, 31, 34.

52. Ibid., II, 34.

53. Russell, Memorials, II, 96.

54. Ibid., II, 178.

55. Ibid., II, 69, 87.

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the cold. It was a sharp contrast to the warm blanket I had been sitting under. I looked around, trying to get my bearings. The street was empty, the only sound being the distant hum of traffic. I felt a little disoriented, but I knew I had to find my way to the office. I started walking, my feet hitting the cold pavement. I passed a few shops, their windows reflecting the streetlights. I felt a little more confident as I walked, knowing that I was on the right track. I saw a sign that said "Office" and I knew I had found it. I walked up the steps and knocked on the door. A woman opened the door, looking at her watch. "You're late," she said. "I'm sorry, I was stuck in traffic." I walked in, feeling a little nervous. The office was quiet, with only a few people working. I took a deep breath and started working. The day went by in a blur, and I felt a little more at ease. I looked at my watch and saw that it was time to go. I packed up my things and walked out of the office. I felt a little tired, but I was happy to be home. I walked to my car and got in. I started the engine and drove home. I felt a little better now, knowing that I had made it through the day. I was proud of myself for being able to handle everything. I was a professional, and I knew I could do anything. I was a woman, and I was strong. I was a mother, and I was loving. I was a friend, and I was helpful. I was a daughter, and I was proud. I was a woman, and I was everything.

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None the less he was sincere in his efforts to provide India with a better form of government.<sup>56</sup> In one of his best speeches he declared, "What is the end of all government? Certainly the happiness of the governed...What are we to think of a government whose good fortune is supposed to spring from the calamities of its subjects?"<sup>57</sup> Refuting the accusation that the bill violated the charter of the East India Company, he said, "A charter is a trust to one or more persons for some given benefit. If this trust be abused...will any man gravely say that that trust should not be resumed and delivered to other hands."<sup>58</sup> Burke gave weight to his colleague's sincerity when he said that Fox had "put hazard to his ease, his security, his interest, his power, even his darling popularity, for the benefit of a people whom he had never seen."<sup>59</sup> Fox himself, in a letter expressing his dislike of the abuse heaped upon him, said that such abuse would never prevent<sup>60</sup> him from doing what he considered to be right.

This was the attitude which involved Fox in the impeachment of Warren Hastings. The trial will always be controversial subject for there was much in it that was both just and unjust. Fox, because he did not acquaint himself with all the facts, saw only the brutal side of Hasting's administration. As a result, when Grenville defended Hastings on the basis of necessity, Fox passionately<sup>61</sup> appealed to principles of justice and humanity. With

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56. Russell, Memorials, II, 97.

57. World Famous Orations, IV, 33; Russell, Memorials, II, 97.

58. Ibid., II, 97; World Famous Orations, IV, 33, 34.

59. Russell, op. cit., II, 98.

60. Ibid., II, 178.

61. Russell, Life and Times, II, 146, 147.





Burke behind him, he began a crusade on behalf of the people of India with Hastings as the martyr. We can commend Fox's motives, but not condone his failure to acquaint himself fully with the whole question.

Fox was sincere in his love of justice and fair play and he had gradually espoused liberal principles, but there were occasions when ambition or personal feelings triumphed at their expense. Although he had already sided with the cause of parliamentary re-<sup>62</sup>form, his coalition agreement with North in 1783 left the question open, for each side was to follow its own ideas.<sup>63</sup> Such an arrangement left little hope for any change and to justify his position Fox could only have believed either that he could make his views prevail, or that reform could afford to wait.<sup>64</sup> His opposition to Pitt's Irish commercial bills in 1785<sup>65</sup> smacked of the use of Irish nationalism for his own purposes, and his attitude during the Regency crisis in 1788-89, was anything but that of a liberal<sup>66</sup> Whig. However, by that time Charles Fox was generally ready to champion the underdog, and he spent much of the remainder of his life doing it. There is little doubt that he was sincere in such efforts, for as he said, those who risked unpopularity by arguing against popular measurers should at least be given credit for<sup>67</sup> their purity of motive as their stand was certainly unprofitable. Fox might have fared better if some of his critics had kept this

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62. See Chapter IV, p. 38, 39.

63. Russell, Memorials, II, 51.

64. See Chapter IV, p. 39.

65. For example, during the debate Fox stated, "I will not barter English commerce for Irish slavery." (Modern Orator, II, 243).

66. See Chapter IV, p. 45, 46, 47.

67. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 391.



statement in mind during the years of the French Revolution. Fox's eloquent and whole-hearted support of the Revolution should have occasioned no surprise after the stand he had taken on American, Indian and Irish affairs. Although he distrusted the Bourbon government, Fox had always had an affection for France, and he<sup>68</sup> considered her to be an enlightened nation. It is not strange that he welcomed the revolution as a chance for the French people to gain political freedom. His enthusiasm found words with the fall of the Bastille which he described as the greatest event in<sup>69</sup> the history of the world. The new French constitution which followed he considered "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country."<sup>70</sup> He was not immune to the horror of the bloodshed that soon accompanied the upheaval, but believed the revolution should be viewed with compassion in the light of the tyranny that had existed before it came.<sup>71</sup> As far as England was concerned, he considered that the new form of government in<sup>72</sup> France would give her a better neighbor, and, despite growing English opposition, and denouncement by Edmund Burke, he proclaimed that, on the whole, the French Revolution was one of the<sup>73</sup> most glorious events in the history of mankind.

Indeed, the growth of opposition in England now to any form of liberalism seemed to spur on Charles Fox to greater efforts in

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68. Parliamentary Debates, LI, 161.

69. Russell, Memorials, II, 296.

70. Russell, Life and Times, II, 251.

71. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 96, 148.

72. Ibid., LII, 57; Russell, Life and Times, II, 248.

73. Parliamentary Debates, LIV, 332.





the cause of religious, political and personal liberty. He had supported religious toleration since he changed sides on the question of the Thirty-nine Articles in 1773.<sup>74</sup> In 1789 he supported Beaufoy's motion for a reconsideration of the Test Corporation Act because he believed that no government had the right to enquire into men's private opinions and, furthermore, that religion should be completely separate from civil government.<sup>75</sup> In 1790 he moved the repeal of the Acts himself on the same basis.<sup>76</sup> In the following year he supported the Catholic Relief Bill, though its scope was more limited than he wished,<sup>77</sup> and in 1792 sought to secure for the Unitarians, the same legal rights as the other Dissenters.<sup>78</sup> As Lecky points out, under Fox, religious liberty became one of the tenets of the Whig party.<sup>79</sup>

Fox was concerned not only with freedom of conscience and political liberty, but also with the right of the individual to personal liberty. He supported Wilberforce's motion on the slave trade in 1789 and again in 1791, and despite its defeat, he was almost naively pleased that he had spoken well for such a cause.<sup>80</sup> In 1791 he brought to the House one of his few legislative contributions - his Libel Bill - based on a bill he had opposed vigorously twenty years before. He argued his convictions so eloquently that his measure passed with little debate.<sup>81</sup> The bill

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74. Russell, Memorials, I, 153, 172, 209; Toynbee, Walpole Letters XI, 233.

75. Parliamentary Debates, LI, 118.

76. Ibid., LII, 151, 152.

77. Lecky, History of England, VI, 43, 44.

78. Ibid., VI, 29.

79. Ibid., VI, 43.

80. Russell, op. cit., II, 297, 298

81. Ibid., II, 299.



established the right of juries to decide the issue in a libel case, and the judges were confined to directing the jury. It was not only a lasting contribution, but a timely one, for during the coming years English juries proved more than once to be a bulwark of free speech.

Charles Fox had come a long way since the days when the newspapers condemned his "indecent and most shocking behaviour." on matters concerning the liberty of the press. By 1792 he had declared himself to be an enemy to shackles on the press because<sup>82</sup> they restrained the liberty of the people, and he spoke with sincerity about "the original inherent rights of the people.... which no prescription could supersede, no accident remove or obliterate."<sup>83</sup>

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82. Parliamentary Debates, LIV, 447.

83. Ibid., LIV, 334.





FOX AND THE CONSTITUTION.

There is a definite division between the early and later career of Charles Fox on matters such as personal and religious liberty, but in his attitude towards parliament and the constitution, some of his earlier views long retained some hold upon him, and his impetuosity and ambition led him to revert to them on at least one notorious occasion. In his early years the chief concern of Fox was for the privileges of parliament, which, he claimed, was appointed by the constitution as the only revealer of the national mind, the only judge of what ought to be the sentiments of the country,<sup>1</sup> and the best judge of the public welfare.<sup>2</sup> In stentorian tones he voiced the belief that "We have higher obligations to justice than to our constituents."<sup>3</sup> He stoutly defended the constitution against the people, for he believed it to be the business of the people to choose the Commons and the business of the Commons to maintain the independence of parliament.<sup>4</sup> "I can never acknowledge for the voice of the nation," he said,<sup>5</sup> "what is not echoed by the majority of this House." Not only his words<sup>6</sup> but also his actions in the trials of the Lord Mayor in 1771, and Woodfall the printer in 1774, illustrate that Fox's belief in the privileges of parliament was such that he considered no man had the right to disobey them.<sup>7</sup> His concern carried him to the lengths of condoning the abuse of parliamentary privilege in the case of the Middlesex election.<sup>8</sup> The basis of his opposition to the

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1. The Modern Orator, II, 7.

2. Ibid., II, 10.

3. Ibid., II, 8.

4. Ibid., II, 10.

5. Ibid., II, 5.

6. Parliamentary Debates, VII, 37.

7. See Chapter III, p. 23, 24.

8. Parliamentary Debates, VII, 36; VIII, 234.



Grenville plan for hearing disputed elections was that, in using the procedure, the ministers were giving up the rights of the House.<sup>9</sup> But while Fox stormed against the danger of the democratic form of government, he considered that, just as the privileges of the people should be kept within bounds, so should those of the crown.<sup>10</sup> This he extended even to the power of the aristocracy when, in 1771, he defended his father as the author of the proscriptions at the beginning of the reign on the basis that it was right to break the aristocratic power that had governed in the name of the late king.<sup>11</sup> This defense was a significant guide to his political ideas for, as he said himself, it was with the attack on parliamentary privilege, not the quarter from which it came,<sup>12</sup> that he was concerned.

In line with his ideas on the rights of parliament and the necessity of maintaining the constitution as it stood, the young politician would have nothing to do with any move that smacked of "constitutional innovation".<sup>13</sup> His attitude toward parliament was that of an aristocrat. He would have no part of democratic representation as we know it, yet he believed that parliament should, in general, represent the wishes of the people.<sup>14</sup> His idea, like that of Burke, was a virtual representation of the people: the commercial interest, the manufacturers, the landed interests, the

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9. Russell, Memorials, I, 121.

10. The Modern Orator, II, 8.

11. Russell, op. cit., I, 75.

12. The Modern Orator, II, 10.

13. Ibid., II, 8; Parliamentary Debates, VII, 325.

14. In speaking of America in 1774 Fox declared that to govern a country without its consent was a sure road to rebellion (Russell, op. cit., I, 123).





aristocracy and so on.

After his dismissal by Lord North in 1774, Fox was soon supporting Whig policy with vigour, and this support brought a modification of some of his ideas, and a complete change in others. Long tenure of office had destroyed the Whig principles, but with the advent of George III, and the turn of fortune to the Tories, the Whigs, driven into opposition, were forced back to the liberal views they had once held. They espoused the cause of liberty of the press and denounced the growing influence of the crown, the abuse of the privileges of parliament, the corruption of parliament, and finally, the methods of taxing America. They were still aristocratic and torn with dissension, but they were once more the "popular" party.<sup>15</sup> Their policy toward the crown certainly suited Fox, and there is reason to believe that their American policy did too.<sup>16</sup> On the question of reform the answer is not so clear-cut. Public discussion of the need for parliamentary reform arose with the Wilkes affair, and although it faded with the issue, the mismanagement of the American war brought it again to the fore.<sup>17</sup> A meeting at York in 1779 favoring economic reform and shorter parliaments gained prominent Whigs, including Rockingham, Devonshire, Fitzwilliam and Shelburne, although Rockingham later backed out.<sup>18</sup> The following year Charles Fox also espoused the cause of reform although as

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15. Sir Thomas Erskine May, The Constitutional History of England (London, 1912), I, 17, 405.
  16. See Chapter III, p. 10, 27.
  17. Butler, Reform Bill, 4, 5, 6.
  18. Ibid., 6.



late as 1775 he expressed disapproval of constitutional changes. Walpole claims that Shelburne supported reform through ambition, while Fox approved it because of his desperate situation.<sup>20</sup> If Walpole was referring to Fox's financial difficulties, his explanation does not carry much weight, for debts were chronic with Fox and he was notoriously casual about them. Nor does it seem probable that a desire for office would cause Fox to grasp at a popular cause. At that time such an action did not assure success; furthermore such an attempt to gain acclaim would not have been in character, for Fox was never inclined to court popular opinion. However, the aspersions cast upon Fox's motives in favoring reform are supported by Walpole's contention that Fox was opposed to reform proposals at the Westminster committee prior to the meeting of the Westminster Association in 1780.<sup>21</sup> If such was the case, and Fox's opposition was to reform in general rather than to specific measures, his conversion does have an air of expediency, for he was a forceful champion of reform at the Westminster meeting, and was chosen as the constituency's candidate for parliament. However, he should probably be given more credit than this implies, for his declaration at the Westminster meeting had the ring of sincerity in that he based his support of reform on the undue influence of the crown and the attempt of the ministers to destroy the liberty of the people.<sup>22</sup> On these grounds he supported annual parliaments and more equal representation, and in the house a few weeks later

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19. Parliamentary Debates, VII, 325.

20. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XI, 143, 144.

21. Russell, Memorials, I, 200.

22. Ibid., I, 203; Fortescue, George III, V, 175.





supported a motion for triennial parliaments. The most likely explanation of Fox's conversion is that he was becoming a true Whig, and more important, that he saw parliamentary reform as a well-fashioned weapon to combat the influence of the crown. Reform was a means and not necessarily an end.

The support Fox gave to Burke's economic reform bill, for example, was based on his idea of a good stout blow to the influence of the crown.<sup>24</sup> Fox accepted the principle of reform generally, but was not ready to risk his political life for it. Among reformers there was a great divergence of opinion on the extent and method of parliamentary reform.<sup>25</sup> While the Rockingham group supported Burke's ideas, Shelburne and his followers were pledged to the more sweeping Yorkshire proposals.<sup>26</sup> After the death of Rockingham, Fox told the Duke of Richmond that the Rockingham Whigs had lost out to Shelburne through a too decided advocacy of reform.<sup>27</sup> If Fox was speaking of reform in general, such a statement is hard to reconcile with the mild measures the Rockingham Whigs advocated, but it is more easily understood if Fox meant advocacy of his own particular views on reform. At any rate he supported Pitt's attempt at reform in 1782 but demanded added county members to further strengthen the forces of land and money against the crown.<sup>28</sup> On the defeat of Shelburne in 1783, the Fox-North coalition left the question of reform open, thus effectively

23. Russell, Memorials, I, 205.

24. The Modern Orator, II, 62.

25. Russell, op. cit., I, 251, 252.

26. Butler, Reform Bill, 8.

27. Lewis, Administration of Great Britain, cited in Butler, op. cit., 9.

28. Butler, op. cit., 9.



shelving it for the time being. Such action was probably not as unprincipled as it sounds, for only a few months before the Westminster Association had declared itself adverse to any specific proposal.<sup>29</sup> It was not until 1785 that the question once more came before parliament, again at the instigation of Pitt. Fox, probably somewhat soured by Pitt's actions in the scrutiny of his own Westminster election was not above retaliating by joining Burke in his objection to compensation for borough owners,<sup>30</sup> but he did give the measure his general support.<sup>31</sup> Pitt's motion was lost and the reform movement did not again gain any great following until the next decade. Probably the agitation for reform lessened after 1785 because a return of prosperity made political grievances seem less acute. Another factor was that outside London there was little democratic feeling until the growth of the industrial centres of the north.<sup>32</sup> Possibly if Fox and the Whigs had been more enthusiastic and united, some measure of reform still might have been carried before the reaction of the 'nineties.

Although George III claimed to fear for the constitution at the hands of Fox,<sup>33</sup> he had little cause for worry on the question of real parliamentary reform, for Fox was never its avid supporter. In 1782 Fox was still supporting the independence of parliament; he was the only politician of prominence who still maintained that the house had not exceeded its authority regarding Wilkes and the Middlesex election,<sup>34</sup> despite the fact that three years earlier he

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29. Butler, Reform Bill, 10.

30. Lecky, History of England, V, 338; Butler op. cit., 11.

31. Russell, Life and Times, II, 175.

32. Butler, op. cit., 12, 13.

33. Fortescue, George III, VI, 97.

34. May, Constitutional History, I, 325.





had declared the House competent only to inquire, examine, censure,  
but not punish.<sup>35</sup> Fell maintains that when Fox was accused in 1780  
of abandoning his former views on the Middlesex election, he apol-  
ogized for his early attitude and claimed that he then had built his  
argument on the power of the people and the fact that the voice of  
the people was collected in the House. He now declared that when  
a representative body did not reflect the real feelings of the  
people, the people were within their rights if they used other  
than the conventional means of correcting the situation.<sup>36</sup> Fox was  
probably speaking of the use of petitions, but if Fell's reporting  
is accurate, the statement must have sounded ominous to George III.<sup>37</sup>  
In defending Burke's economic reform bill in 1780, Fox declared that  
the king was the creature of the people's institution and that his  
power was held in trust for the people. All power that was lodged  
in the crown, or elsewhere, belonged finally to the nation.<sup>38</sup> With  
statements such as these from a leading Whig, and the record of  
Whig opposition during the American War, it is small wonder that  
George III feared for his system of government.

The king must have felt with Fox that the advent of the Rock-  
ingham administration in 1782 was indeed tantamount to a change in  
the constitution.<sup>39</sup> George III believed it to be the duty of min-  
isters to accept office and then discuss policy,<sup>40</sup> but the public  
demand for an end to the American War enabled Rockingham to

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35. The Modern Orator, II, 33.

36. Fell, Memoirs of Fox, I, 26-29.

37. Fell is not always accurate so there is reason for suspicion.

38. The Modern Orator, II, 59.

39. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, Introd., XXI.

40. Pares, George III, 119.



impose terms upon the king before he would take office. Fox was interested in staying in power only long enough to block the influence of the crown,<sup>42</sup> and the Whig policy, itself, was a neg-  
 ation of personal government by the crown. Rockingham and his followers wanted a carte blanche on policy, the issue on which the coalition attempts of 1778-79 had failed.<sup>43</sup> This time Rockingham had his way although negotiations were carried on through Shelburne and it was soon obvious that the latter was the king's man in the cabinet.<sup>44</sup> Under this ministry - and by Fox in particular - the right of cabinet initiative without specific reference or permission from the king was claimed for the first time.<sup>45</sup> On Rockingham's death another constitutional claim was put forward, when Fox declared the right of the cabinet to choose its own head.<sup>46</sup> However, Fox was probably not considering the constitutional aspect of the question, but rather the personal one of keeping Shelburne out of a controlling position.

Despite the attempts of the short Rockingham administration to overthrow the king's system, it was the Fox-North coalition that brought on the real battle. Although ministers, in practice, had been responsible to parliament since the revolution of 1688, it was not until the rule of the first two George's that the principle was more or less recognized. The Fox-North coalition was a reaffirmation of this principle which had been set aside by

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- 41. Pares, George III, 119.
  - 42. Russell, Memorials, I, 253.
  - 43. Pares, op. cit., 119-n2, n 3.
  - 44. Fortescue, George III, V, 463, 464; VI, 10, 21.
  - 45. Pares, op. cit., 154.
  - 46. Ibid., 121.





George III, for the ministry, though consisting of two parties, reflected a majority in parliament. However, the widespread public attitude that it was an "infamous coalition" shows that the public acceptance of the principle of responsibility was not yet final. The issue of ministerial responsibility came to a head over the defeat of the coalition's India Bill through the interference of the king in the House of Lords, and the consequent dismissal of the ministry. The defeat in the Lords was reason enough for ousting the administration,<sup>47</sup> but the method and the purpose of that defeat were common knowledge and could not, in the strictest sense, be considered ethical or legal. Lord Russell suggests that the proper course would have been for the Duke of Portland, as titular head of the ministry, to ascertain from the king exactly what had happened,<sup>48</sup> and for Fox to have resigned immediately.<sup>49</sup> However, Fox, confident that he could displace Pitt, the new first minister, through the majority that the coalition still held in the House of Commons, misguidedly let the issue rest on the question of royal prerogative, and allowed George III to convince public opinion that an attack was being made on one section of the balanced constitution, the crown.<sup>50</sup> It was a fatal mistake. The king had the unquestioned prerogatives of appointing his ministers and of dissolution.<sup>51</sup> Fox seemed to deny him nearly every prerogative. In regard to the India Bill he claimed that the king's veto, like his other prerogatives,

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47. Pares, George III, 40.

48. Russell, Life and Times, II, 43.

49. Ibid., II, 47.

50. Russell, Memorials, II, 191; Pares, op. cit., 32.

51. May, Constitutional History, I, 50.



should be used only on the advice of his responsible ministers.

In denying Pitt's right to his office, Fox was denying the king's prerogative in the choice of his ministers. He claimed that from the right of parliament to condemn ministers followed the right of

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designating them. However, this claim was not supported by either king or parliament. The stand Fox took on the royal prerogative could be considered as ahead of the times. His main blunder, both politically and constitutionally, was his attempt to avoid a dissolution of parliament. He evidently believed he had a better chance to regain power through his majority in the existing House of Commons than through an appeal to the people on the basis of the dismissal of the coalition and the India Bill. In his vain attempt to avoid a dissolution he placed his own party, supposedly standing on liberal principles, in the unfortunate position of resisting an appeal to the people. If he had allowed the dissolution, his party could have gone to the country with a good fighting cause - their ministry had been unconstitutionally dismissed.

When the election finally came he had to seek support on the principle that the crown did not possess the prerogative to dissolve parliament in the middle of a session.

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He thus not only denied his own party, but the new administration and the crown, an appeal to the electors, and in coercing the king with a parliamentary majority, he over-stepped the constitutional limits of

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power. By avoiding dissolution, he virtually declared that the issue involved in his struggle with the king and Pitt was the privileges of the Commons versus the prerogative of the crown.

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52. Pares, George III, 132.

53. Ibid., 205.

54. Russell, Memorials, II, 191.

55. May, Constitutional History, I, 58.





Fox practically handed Pitt a strong cause: the defence of the crown and the constitution. His own attitude was reminiscent of the Fox of the 'seventies who had declared that parliament was independent of the crown and the people.

Another phase of the constitutional controversy - the place and limits of opposition - was emphasized by the struggle of Fox and Pitt in 1784. During the North administration, the king regarded any opposition as an act of disloyalty, and there is no reason to believe that he ever changed his mind. Fox was evidently one of the few politicians who openly admitted the right to oppose the king systematically, although many others practiced systematic opposition. However, even to Fox there may have been limits to opposition. Pares explains the length of the battle between Fox and Pitt in 1784 by the fact that Pitt was driving Fox to the extremity of withholding supplies in order to prevent a dissolution, while Fox was trying to avoid this extreme because of the general repugnance with which it was viewed. Eventually the Commons voted the postponement of supplies, but even then they disclaimed any intention of an absolute refusal.

To the voters of Westminster Fox's defence of his actions during this struggle with Pitt and the king was that he had attempted, as he had done on previous occasions, to protect the rights of the people against encroachment by the crown. However,

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56. Russell, Life and Times, II, 56.

57. May, Constitutional History, I, 31.

58. Pares, George III, 97.

59. See infra, p. 51-n83.

60. Pares, op. cit., 98.

61. May, op. cit., I, 55.

62. The Modern Orator, II, 150n.



the election of 1784 proved that many thought as Samuel Johnson; "Here is a man [Fox] ...who has divided the Kingdom with Caesar; so that it was a doubt whether the nation should be ruled by the sceptre of George the Third, or the tongue of Fox."<sup>63</sup> The controversy over the king's dismissal of the coalition and appointment of Pitt did settle the fact that a ministry appointed by the crown without the support of the house, could appeal to the people, for<sup>64</sup> it was with them that the final decision lay.

The confused picture posterity received of Charles Fox's political ideas through his actions in 1784 has been heightened by his stand on the Regency question of 1788-89. While he supported the privileges of the Commons against the prerogative of the crown in the former, during the latter he reversed his stand and championed the rights of the crown against parliament. When the insanity of George III was made known to the Commons, Pitt proposed a committee to search for precedents. Fox leapt to his<sup>65</sup> feet to say that no such precedent existed; a statement in which he was justified. He then made a decisive mistake, for in his torrential manner he declared "that he had not in his mind a doubt...that, in the present condition of his Majesty, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales had as clear, as express a right to exercise the power of sovereignty...as in the case of<sup>66</sup> his Majesty's having undergone a natural demise." Pitt was not

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63. Boswell, Life of Johnson, 1106.

64. Russell, Memorials, II, 203, 204.

65. Parliamentary Debates, XLIX, 23.

66. Ibid., XLIX, 24; Russell, op. cit., II, 216.





slow to see that with this statement Fox denied parliament any rights in the matter. The head of the ministry charted his course of action accordingly with the remark, "I'll un-whig the gentleman for the rest of his life!"<sup>67</sup> Fox had again allowed Pitt the superior position of defender of the constitution, and this time, of what should have been the Whig position. To assert such a right for the Prince of Wales independent of parliament, Pitt declared, was little less than treason.<sup>68</sup> Fox answered with a defence based on the three sections of the government. The right to make laws rested with the complete legislature, king, Lords and Commons; the two houses were only part of it and could not assume the functions of the whole.<sup>69</sup> The explanation of his stand - the exercise of royal authority, was a right, not a possession - came two days later, but it begged the question. The prince had the right to the regency but the actual rights of a regent should be decided by the two houses.<sup>70</sup> He exercised the regency as a trust of the people.<sup>71</sup>

The battle was a furious one, with the motives of each side impugned by the other. When Lord Frederick Campbell protested his purity of motive, Fox replied, "As to the noble Lord's declaration that his motives were pure...he had always had the good fortune to have the noble Lord with him when he was in office, but never had that good fortune when out of his Majesty's service."<sup>72</sup>

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67. Russell, Memorials, II, 216.  
68. Parliamentary Debates, XLIX, 26.  
69. Ibid., XLIX, 78.  
70. Ibid., XLIX, 35.  
71. Ibid., XLIX, 44.  
72. Ibid., XLIX, 46.



Fox's motives themselves were certainly open to suspicion, for it was general knowledge that with the Prince of Wales as regent, the Whigs would be in office. That fact was emphasized to an unhappy degree by Fox's reversal from previous stands on the matter of royal prerogative. Fox defended his actions with the convenient doctrine that resistance to prerogative was proper when there was danger of encroachment by the crown, but this was not such a case.<sup>73</sup> When Pitt attempted to limit the powers of the regent, Fox claimed that to change the kingly office was more serious than to change the person of the king.<sup>74</sup> This was the basis upon which he built the defence of his regency stand when he was writing his history of James II many years later. The Whigs, he claimed then, in considering the powers of the crown as a trust for the people, would not consent to the loss of any part of those powers. Those [i.e. the Tories] who considered the monarch himself to be all important would consent either to the extension or suspension of the prerogative.<sup>75</sup>

Although the position he took was contradictory to the principles he supported during most of his life, Fox, as he did in the case of Wilkes, later must have convinced himself of the justice of his cause, to have retained his belief for so many years. The breadth of his reversal from the principles he had formerly upheld is illustrated by the fact that the ultra-Tory Selwyn, reporting that the Whigs were angry with Fox, added that he himself

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73. Parliamentary Debates, XLIX, 80, 81.

74. Ibid., XLIX, 280.

75. Russell, Life and Times, II, 197, 198.



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supported the Fox stand. The caricaturists of the day showed the general odium in which Fox stood by picturing him as "The Word Eater."<sup>77</sup>

Fox's behaviour on constitutional matters previous to 1788 supports the belief that his stand on the regency affair was a political aberration and his attitude to constitutional matters during the ensuing years supports this assumption. In 1790 Fox was sounding his old cry on the greatness of the powers and privileges of parliament, but he admitted that the use of powers<sup>78</sup> should be tempered by discretion. He again supported the privileges of parliament on the question of the effect of parliament's<sup>79</sup> dissolution on the impeachment of Warren Hastings. During the debate on the negotiations with Spain over the Nootka Sound affair in 1790, Fox objected to what he called the "blind confidence," that the ministers expected of the house. The old term "jealousy" expressed the function of the house better, he said, for it described the duty of the house to regard every act with vigilance<sup>80</sup> and to remind the minister of his responsibility to the house. Fox had long believed that blind confidence in the ministers on<sup>81</sup> the part of the house was sometimes necessary, but that such confidence should be given rarely.<sup>82</sup> The expectancy of such confidence by the government in Pitt's policy on Russian claims to the port of Ozachow in 1791 he attacked, objecting to the request

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- 76. H.M.C. Carlisle Papers, 659.
  - 77. Wright, Caricature History, 430.
  - 78. Parliamentary Debates, LIII, 284.
  - 79. Ibid., LIII, 278.
  - 80. Ibid., LIII, 83.
  - 81. Modern Orator, II, 17.
  - 82. Parliamentary Debates, LIV, 41.

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated March 1, 1801. It contains a report on the state of the Union and the progress of the government during the first year of the administration of the President.

2. The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated March 1, 1801. It contains a detailed account of the financial state of the government and the measures taken to improve the public credit.

3. The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated March 1, 1801. It contains a detailed account of the state of the Navy and the measures taken to improve it.

4. The fourth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated March 1, 1801. It contains a detailed account of the state of the Army and the measures taken to improve it.

5. The fifth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated March 1, 1801. It contains a detailed account of the state of the Department of the Interior and the measures taken to improve it.

6. The sixth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State, dated March 1, 1801. It contains a detailed account of the state of the Department of State and the measures taken to improve it.

7. The seventh part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated March 1, 1801. It contains a detailed account of the state of the Army and the measures taken to improve it.

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for armaments when the ministry was reticent about its plans. The crown had the prerogative to declare war, he said, but the Commons had the right to refuse supplies even if war was de-  
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clared. He asserted that it was constitutional to advise the crown on the use of the prerogative, and he had always considered that the house had that right on the question of the prorogation or dissolution of parliament. Advice on peace and war  
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had been voted in 1778, 1779 and again in 1783. When it seemed that parliament might be prorogued before the business of armament was settled, Fox once more declared that he would not trust the king and ministers with even a little of the privileges of the house. "However much he respected the just prerogatives of the crown, he never would encroach on the privileges of the  
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people," was the way he put it.

The outbreak of the French Revolution and Fox's continued concern for the "privileges of the people" brought on his famous quarrel with Burke, and once more focussed the attention of a suspicious public on his constitutional ideas. The debate on the army estimates in February of 1790 brought the first open signs of the disagreement between Fox and Burke. However, in answering Burke's attack on the French Revolution, Fox declared that he was

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83. Parliamentary Debates, L1V, 279. The implication is that Fox believed the Commons might, on occasion, refuse supplies. If he did, Pares' explanation of the Fox-Pitt struggle of 1784 (see p.46) can be questioned, for in such a case the only restraint upon Fox would have been public and parliamentary odium, a reaction that rarely deterred him, and one that he was then ignoring in his move to prevent a dissolution. Wraxall reports that in 1781 Fox supported a move to stop supplies. (Wraxall, Memoirs, 403).

84. Parliamentary Debates, L1V, 570.

85. Ibid., L1V, 608, 609.





no friend of democracy as such, but an enemy of all forms of absolute government whether it was absolute monarchy, absolute aristocracy or absolute democracy.<sup>86</sup> He again invoked the theme that "True liberty could only exist amidst the union and co-operation of the different powers which composed the legislative and the executive government."<sup>87</sup> He would never support any dangerous innovations to the excellent British constitution although he was no enemy to every innovation, and the constitution owed its perfection to changes. However admirable a theory, experience<sup>88</sup> was a true test. A month later, in supporting the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, he reiterated the idea of occasional change, and this time added, that an occasional change prevented<sup>89</sup> the encroachments of the crown. It was on this same basis that he supported Flood's motion for reform although he admitted that it was not a question that had the support of the majority of the people. He proved his previous claim that he was no democrat when he disagreed with Flood that representation (specifically in the case of Middlesex) should always reflect the majority. He supported his stand by pointing out that an increased representation would not have prevented the American War although it<sup>90</sup> would have brought an earlier peace. When this question of reform was threatening to split the Whigs, Fox wrote that he had not made any statements in the cause of reform that he had not

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86. Parliamentary Debates, L11, 95.

87. Ibid., L11, 95.

88. Ibid., L11, 95.

89. Ibid., L11, 148.

90. Ibid., L11, 211.

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made years before. He was quite justified in his assertion, for he had never been a leader but always a follower in the movement, and his attitude had not changed. His views on the subject of parliamentary reform were really moderate enough in the early years of the French Revolution to have satisfied the most conservative Whigs if it had not been for the growing movement in England towards reaction. Indeed, during the debate on the Spanish negotiations in December, 1790, Fox remarked that all members were on equal footing whether they represented an extensive county, the city, or a rotten borough. They were representatives, not of a particular body, but of the people of Great Britain. As far as he was concerned, pleasing his constituents was an inferior consideration to discharging the duty with which they had entrusted him.<sup>92</sup>

None the less, Fox told the Commons during the debate on the Quebec Bill in 1791, that the only way of retaining the colonies was to enable them to govern themselves.<sup>93</sup> The dramatic quarrel between Fox and Burke during the debate on this bill overshadows the fact that during the discussion Fox set forth many of his ideas on government. There was a lengthy discussion on the proposed Canadian equivalents to the British Commons and Lords. Fox criticized the proposed assembly - the lower house - for though the object was the full and free representation of the people, the qualifications were too high, and the length of parliaments too long, for the country. The terms undermined the purpose of the bill, popular government for Canada. As to the upper house - the council - while a hereditary aristocracy was wise where it had

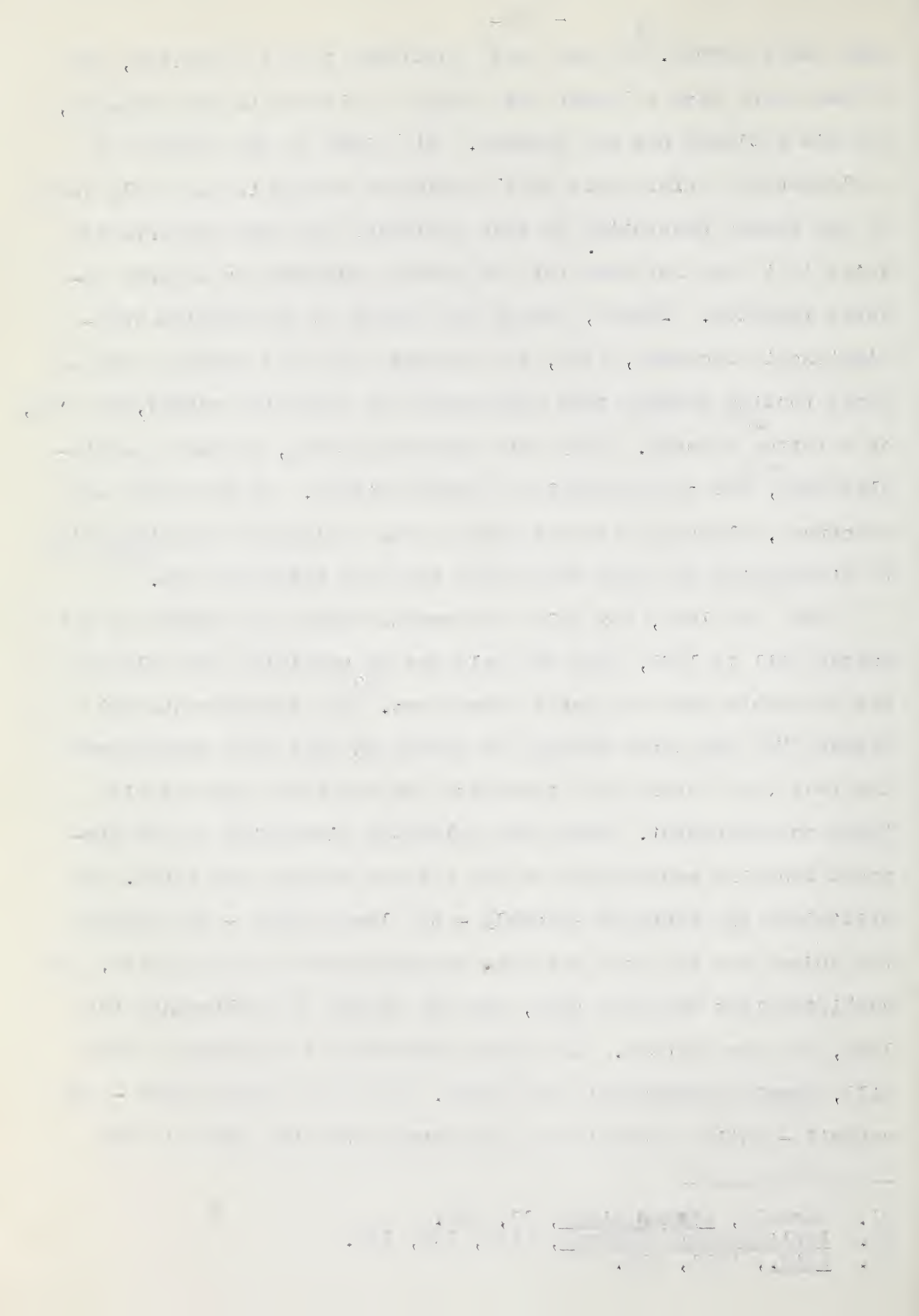
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91. Russell, Life and Times, II, 283.

92. Parliamentary Debates, LIII, 102, 103.

93. Ibid., LIII, 515.





been long established, there was danger of an aristocracy becoming a tool of governor and king when introduced in a country where such a class was hitherto unknown.<sup>94</sup> The United States had a government as well adapted to its people as any in the world, Fox declared, and it was important that Canada should have nothing to envy, for the colony could only be retained by Britain through choice.<sup>95</sup> In summing up his arguments, Fox said that in Britain the monarchy, aristocracy and democracy were united, with the aristocracy as the balance that provided incentive and reward. The three sections were necessary in Canada, but not in the same form, for one could not create respect for an aristocracy. He recommended that the upper house be elective, but with a higher property qualification than that of the assembly. Such a system would preserve the old forms and guard against innovations either of the crown or the people.<sup>96</sup>

Fox's panegyric on the French Revolution and Burke's violent diatribe against it and his erstwhile friend, gave weight to the accusation that Fox was really a republican.<sup>97</sup> The accusation was not a new one, for in 1784 the caricaturists had pictured the people as "The Unfortunate Ass" with the king pulling him toward absolutism and Fox toward republicanism.<sup>98</sup> At that time Fox had spoken of the constitution as "that happy practical equilibrium which has all the efficacy of monarchy, and all the liberty of republicanism; moderating the despotism of the one, and the licentiousness of the other."<sup>99</sup> In 1791 Fox defended himself by

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94. Parliamentary Debates, LIV, 70, 71.

95. Ibid., LIV, 74.

96. Ibid., LIV, 389, 390, 391.

97. Ibid., LIV, 342; Russell, Life and Times, II, 260.

98. Wright, Caricature History, 318.

99. Russell, Memorials, II, 191.



saying that though he thought the constitution imperfect in theory, he believed it to be well adapted in practice. This, however, did not prevent him from believing that it could be improved.<sup>100</sup>

Did this mean that Fox was a republican despite his protests to the contrary? It would be more apt to term him anti-monarchical for that he was all his life - but his stand did not reach the limits of republicanism. Fox began his political career proclaiming parliament to be independent of both people and king. He modified his sentiments toward the people, although he never lost them to the extent of becoming a democrat. Toward the king he always remained hostile. No doubt the root of this was personal in part, but it is questionable whether this hostility would have been as lasting and as violent if the political aims of the two men had not been directly opposite. George III aimed at personal government; Charles Fox at the supremacy of parliament. As Fox pointed out during the debate on the Quebec Bill, he considered crown, Lords and Commons, an essential combination for the government of Britain.<sup>101</sup> In that sense he accepted the crown, but he foresaw a system of de-personalized or constitutional monarchy as we know it. However, as Pares notes, he had not the conception of the disciplined party necessary for such form of government.<sup>102</sup> If, as Fox said, he believed the constitution to be imperfect in theory but well adapted in practice, it is unlikely that he wanted drastic constitutional change, but rather favored bringing constitutional

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100. Russell, Life and Times, II, 260.

101. See Supra p. 54.

102. Pares, George III, 206.





theory in line with practice. This is supported by his belief that the advent of the Whig party to power in 1782 would be enough to end the personal government of George III.<sup>103</sup> The conflict over the distribution of power between the crown and parliament is cited by Pares as the main constitutional controversy during the reign of George III.<sup>104</sup> The assertion is certainly true, but his statement that Fox was one of those who considered the matter settled, can be questioned. It is strange that if Fox believed the distribution of power to have been settled long before, he should spend his life fighting the influence of the crown, or claim for parliament the right of designating the ministers. However, the fact that he made these claims for parliament, and that his chief concern was for the privileges and the independence of the House of Commons, show that he considered the Commons to be the superior of the three branches of the government. As he stated in 1791, he wished to give the crown more power and the people less when it could be done safely, but he felt that a constitution was more liable to ruin by an increase in the power of the crown than an increase in the power of the people.<sup>105</sup> If this was a republican idea, then Fox was a "republican", for it was the attitude which governed his political career.

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103. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, Introd. XXI.

104. Pares, George III, 35.

105. Parliamentary Debates, LIV, 403.



## Chapter V

### FOX AND BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY.

It is ironic that while one of Charles Fox's greatest talents lay in his aptitude for foreign affairs, the management of British foreign policy occupied little of his whole political career. The obvious reason for this is that only a few months of his life were spent in office. He was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for a few months before his death in 1806. Actually, until the French Revolution, there was little concern in England over foreign matters. The chief interest of the times was the struggle of the various groups for power, and the struggle of those same groups over the personal government of the king. The latter was the prominent political controversy even during the American War. There was no one outstanding foreign question that was considered more demanding than domestic issues until the revolution in France was well under way.

Since he spent so little time actively managing the foreign affairs of his country, Fox's principal contribution in that field came from his role as a critic. He was generally astute about foreign matters where his impetuosity and personal ambition, noticeable in his actions in domestic affairs, did not interfere with his judgement. His views on the affairs of Europe were precise and definite. They changed very little until the French Revolution upset the continent. Consequently, while in opposition, Fox did offer Pitt useful criticism, for foreign policy was hardly Pitt's forte. In the Oczachow affair of 1791, for example, he played an important part by forcing Pitt to change his policy.

To Charles Fox, the basic concern of British foreign policy was the power of the Bourbon monarchy, which constituted, in his





view, the greatest threat to England. Upon this belief he based his policy. The French monarchy, to Fox, harked back to the days of Louis XIV and his universal monarchy. He distrusted and feared<sup>1</sup> the despotic will and ambition of the king, not the people of France. From the early years of the American War he was suspicious of French antagonism toward England, and he did not hesitate to mention that distrust in parliament.<sup>2</sup> It was he who, in 1778, announced to the Commons the alliance of France and America.<sup>3</sup> To Fox then, as in following years, the important thing was to concentrate on France,<sup>4</sup> the true enemy of England. As the American war drew to a close and Fox gained control of foreign policy under the Rockingham administration, and again under the coalition, he attempted to detach the allies from France and to conciliate both America and the nations of Europe.<sup>5</sup> In order to draw Holland again to the side of England,<sup>6</sup> he sought a separate peace with her, and he hoped that by gaining the goodwill of America he could withdraw her, too, from the side of France.<sup>7</sup> With this hope in mind, he supported the acknowledgement of American independence as a spontaneous act and not as a conditional article of the peace treaty.<sup>8</sup> Reports claimed that opposition to this plan in the cabinet was the reason for Fox's resignation from the ministry early in July, 1782.<sup>9</sup> The method of acknowledging

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1. Russell, Memorials, II, 296, 297.

2. Modern Orator, II, 21, 28.

3. Russell, op. cit., I, 149.

4. Ibid., I, 169; Modern Orator, II, 30.

5. Fortescue, George III, VI, 31; Russell, op. cit., I, 278.

6. Ibid., I, 263.

7. Ibid., I, 271, 278, 290.

8. Ibid., IV, 206-208, 219.

9. Russell, op. cit., IV, 258; Lecky, History of England, V, 163.



American independence may not have been the whole cause of Fox's resignation, but his plan for America certainly earned the dis-<sup>10</sup>approval of George III.

The coldness and disapproval shown by the king to Fox, for personal and political reasons, militated against Fox's achieving the ends he wished during his periods in office in both 1782 and 1783.<sup>11</sup> Fox had been quick to denounce the royal policy which had left England without allies during the American War.<sup>12</sup> He realized that to contain the triumphant France of 1782-1783, England must not only attempt to detach the allies from France, but must form a system that would act as a counterpoise to French power: some system of a balance of power. His idea, like that of Chatham,<sup>13</sup> was to form a northern league by alliances with Russia and Prussia. He attempted to construct such a counterpoise on gaining office in 1782, and in a letter to Frederick of Prussia pointed out the ad-<sup>14</sup>vantages of an alliance. Fox stated his aims to be a general peace,<sup>15</sup> the liberty of Europe and the independence of America. He admitted that Britain's difficulties were the result of a poor policy of<sup>16</sup> which the Bourbons had taken advantage. This admission, no doubt, was designed to soothe the Prussian anger which had been aroused by Britain's desertion of her at the end of the Seven Years' War.<sup>17</sup> Fox also attempted to conciliate Russia, despite the disapproval

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10. Fortescue, George III, VI, 10.
  11. Russell, Memorials, II, 76, 79, 115-117, 121, 123, 129, 137; Fortescue, op. cit., VI, 361-362, 365, 377.
  12. Modern Orator, II, 28.
  13. Russell, op. cit., II, 141.
  14. Ibid., I, 268-271.
  15. Ibid., I, 270, 271.
  16. Ibid., I, 268, 269.
  17. Ibid., I, 265.



The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$ . It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$  if and only if the conditions (2) are satisfied. The conditions (2) are necessary and sufficient for the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$ .

In the second part of the paper, the problem of the uniqueness of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$  is considered. It is shown that the system (1) has a unique solution for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$  if and only if the conditions (3) are satisfied. The conditions (3) are necessary and sufficient for the uniqueness of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$ .

In the third part of the paper, the problem of the stability of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$  is considered. It is shown that the system (1) has stable solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$  if and only if the conditions (4) are satisfied. The conditions (4) are necessary and sufficient for the stability of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$ .

In the fourth part of the paper, the problem of the asymptotic stability of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$  is considered. It is shown that the system (1) has asymptotically stable solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$  if and only if the conditions (5) are satisfied. The conditions (5) are necessary and sufficient for the asymptotic stability of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \epsilon, \zeta, \eta, \theta, \iota, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \omicron, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \upsilon, \phi, \chi, \psi, \omega, \varphi$ .

Table 1		Table 2	
$\alpha$	$\beta$	$\gamma$	$\delta$
$\epsilon$	$\zeta$	$\eta$	$\theta$
$\iota$	$\kappa$	$\lambda$	$\mu$
$\nu$	$\xi$	$\omicron$	$\pi$
$\rho$	$\sigma$	$\tau$	$\upsilon$
$\phi$	$\chi$	$\psi$	$\omega$
$\varphi$			

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of George III. He was in power too short a time to accomplish either design in 1782, but returned to office the following year with the same aims. He was as well aware as George III of what he termed the "levity of the Russian court," but he hoped to impress the Empress Catherine with the necessity of an alliance. He also made another attempt to tighten English ties with Prussia. Failing this, Fox hoped that sometime in the future the German Emperor could be drawn away from France. For this reason he disapproved the accession of Hanover in 1785 to the confederation of German states formed by Frederick of Prussia. The move had been made by George III as Elector of Hanover and it was an action that antagonized the Emperor. However, in 1783 as in the preceding year, Fox was unsuccessful with his northern league. By 1785 he almost despaired of ever seeing his proposed system for Europe in force. France seemed to gain yearly. She had improved her position with the Dutch while preserving her friendship with the Empire and Prussia. She had improved her relations with Russia while retaining the goodwill of the Porte. In fact France held the position that Fox wished England to hold. He feared there was little for his own country to do but follow in the steps of the other European nations. However, in 1786 Pitt supported the move of Prussian troops into Holland to forestall the coup of the pro-French party there. This Fox applauded, for he was

18. Fortescue, George III, VI, 10.

19. Russell, Memorials, II, 121, 216, 217.

20. Ibid., II, 121, 141; Fortescue, op. cit., VI, 5.

21. Russell, op. cit., II, 122.

22. Ibid., II, 126.

23. Ibid., II, 223.

24. Ibid., II, 127.

25. Ibid., II, 223.

26. Ibid., II, 223.



anxious not only that Britain should interest herself in affairs on the continent, but also that she should "take such measures as should tend best to preserve the balance of power in Europe."<sup>27</sup>

This support of the balance of power he retained until he considered there was no longer a danger of the ascendancy of France, or of any other power, in Europe.<sup>28</sup> However, he considered the balance of power to be a safeguard for Britain and Europe, not a means of retaining a strict status quo of the individual nations.<sup>29</sup> Though England should have continental connections, they should not be of a kind to drag her into every European quarrel. There were limits<sup>30</sup> to how far afield even the balance of power should carry her.

Thus, during the years preceding the fall of Bourbon France, Fox was the staunch advocate of the system of balances and wanted no part of any move which might gain an advantage for France. This fear of France, heightened by the part she had played in the American War, resulted in one of the few examples of prejudice leading Fox astray in foreign matters. In 1786, the English government succeeded in completing a commercial treaty with France. Fox denounced it with his usual violence, not on a basis of the commercial question, which he mainly ignored, but because of its political aspects, for he considered France to be the inveterate enemy of England.<sup>31</sup> Fox was over-estimating both the designs and the power of France, for that country's financial condition was steadily<sup>32</sup> weakening her. The treaty itself was most advantageous to England.

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27. Russell, Life and Times, II, 202.

28. Parliamentary Debates, L1V, 181.

29. Ibid., L1V, 181.

30. Modern Orator, II, 434, 435.

31. Russell, Memorials, II, 214, 225; Lecky, History of England V, 315ff.

32. Ibid., V, 309, 310.





Fox normally was not completely oblivious to commercial advantage. In 1782 he had pointed out to Frederick of Prussia that the cession of Gibraltar by Britain to Spain would endanger the commerce of Europe in the Mediterranean.<sup>33</sup> In 1791, during the debate on Russia's retention of the port of Oczakow, he noted that Russian control of that port certainly did not endanger British commerce.<sup>34</sup> However, to him, the political aspects of an international question outweighed the commercial. He considered the alliance with Holland, finally concluded in 1788, to be of far more importance than trade with the Spanish colonies.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, he was well aware of the vital importance of the policy of the Netherlands towards Britain, and of the danger that control of the Low Countries by a nation such as France could bring.<sup>36</sup> At the end of the American War he had first attempted to separate the Dutch from France by a separate peace, and when the treaty was finally signed in 1783, he made a determined attempt to strengthen England's position in Holland.<sup>37</sup> English support of Prussian intervention in Holland, and the eventual treaty between England, Prussia and Holland guaranteeing the position of the Dutch Stadholder, he received with enthusiasm, although he realized that Holland could still be a danger spot.<sup>38</sup>

His fears were calmed before long, for with the revolution in France, the distrust of that country which had governed his foreign policy for years evaporated. On the fall of the Bastille in the

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33. Russell, Memorials, I, 270.

34. Parliamentary Debates, LIV, 46.

35. Ibid., LIII, 115.

36. Russell, op. cit., II, 226.

37. Ibid., II, 141; Modern Orator, II, 298.

38. H.M.C. Carlisle Papers, 652.



summer of 1789, Fox declared that his suspicion of a French connection with England would be over, and most of his system of European politics changed, if the revolution had the results he expected.<sup>39</sup> The Revolution had just that effect, for from that time he refused to believe that England was endangered by France.<sup>40</sup> The Bourbon policy was what he had feared. The French themselves he now considered too busy with domestic matters to trouble with external affairs.<sup>41</sup> The change heightened the dislike he had long had of large peacetime defensive forces for England, and of war itself.<sup>42</sup> During the debate on the Nootka Sound quarrel with Spain in 1790, he declared that in no war did the profits exceed the costs in expense and calamity.<sup>43</sup> The only justifiable war was one to preserve national honour. In this case he considered the national honour involved, for he shared Pitt's indignation over Spain's seizure of British ships in an attempt to exclude British settlers from the Pacific coast of America, and he supported an increase in the British navy.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, he was highly, and perhaps overly,<sup>45</sup> critical of the final agreement with Spain. Actually he thought there was little to fear from Spain as long as she did not combine with France.<sup>46</sup> Though he supported an increase in armaments for specific purposes such as the Nootka Sound affair, he did not approve it generally. In peace a reduction of arms was in order, especially as alliances, such as those with Holland and Prussia,

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39. Russell, Memorials, II, 297

40. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 57, 76; LIII, 27.

41. Ibid., LII, 57, 76.

42. Modern Orator, II, 21; Russell, op. cit., I, 127.

43. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 604.

44. Ibid., LII, 567.

45. Ibid., LIII, 103ff.

46. Ibid., LII, 57.





could be considered as an indirect augmentation of the army. The most pardonable error a minister might make in peacetime, he declared, was to have the armed forces lower than they really ought to be.<sup>47</sup> Fox's pacifist leanings were to become more pronounced in the years that followed.

On this question of armaments Fox gained his last popular success. In 1791 Pitt, in delivering a message to the Commons from the king asking for an increase in naval strength, supported the request with only a very general statement of policy. As Fox<sup>48</sup> said, Pitt enveloped himself in mystery. Evidently the government planned to support Turkey against Russia's claim to the port of Oczakow which she had captured in 1788, not long after the two countries went to war. Fox naturally inclined towards Russia and could see no justification for such a policy. He pointed out that the English government had supported Russia for many years, and had done so as recently as 1787 when, with Prussia, England had encouraged the Russian attack on Turkey. If, as Pitt said, England was bound to see peace restored, why had she not prevented the war in the first place? Furthermore, the original capture of Oczakow<sup>49</sup> had occasioned no alarm. As far as Fox was concerned, the Russian alliance was the most natural and advantageous for Britain, and he<sup>50</sup> took Pitt to task for his whole defensive system. When Pitt attempted to soothe the controversy he had aroused by declaring that what was grounds for armament was not necessarily cause for war, a fresh storm of protests erupted. "What! were we degraded into a mere bully...?" asked Fox. "Nothing could justify an armament, which could not justify a war; for, a nation...once discovered

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47. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 56-58.

48. Ibid., LIV, 42.

49. Ibid., LIV, 42, 43.

50. Ibid., LIV, 44-46; 181; Modern Orator, II, 456.



to have armed in bravado, would find little regard paid to her armaments again.<sup>51</sup> Fox would have no part of the argument that the support of Turkey was necessary for the balance of power unless the government could show how that balance was endangered.<sup>52</sup> Unless one nation was as strong and as dangerous as France had been formerly, Fox was not particularly concerned whether or not there was a definite balance of power in Europe.<sup>53</sup> In all interference with foreign nations, Fox declared, justice was the best foundation of policy, and moderation the surest pledge of peace.<sup>54</sup> The speeches of Fox on this occasion are among his most famous, for his conclusions on the Oczakow affair were astute, his attack on the policy of Pitt, brilliant. Once again he was voicing the attitude of parliament and the public, and Pitt was forced to retreat.<sup>55</sup>

This was Fox's last real triumph, and it brought him popularity not only at home, but abroad. Fox had long been highly regarded by members of Britain's diplomatic staff.<sup>56</sup> When he had returned to the foreign office in 1783, Lord Malmesbury wrote that his presence would restore foreign confidence in England.<sup>57</sup> Wraxall records that as foreign secretary Fox had "universal approbation" and the admiration of foreign ambassadors in England.<sup>58</sup> Horace Walpole reports in a similar vein.<sup>59</sup> Though the

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51. Parliamentary Debates, LIV, 181.

52. Ibid., LIV, 42.

53. Ibid., LIV, 181.

54. Ibid., LIV, 44.

55. Russell, Life and Times, II, 205; Lecky, History of England VI, 171-175

56. Russell, Memorials, II, 117-120.

57. Ibid., II, 120.

58. Wraxall, Memoirs, 567.

59. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XLII, 140.





French regarded him as less tractable than his predecessors,<sup>61</sup> he was well thought of in Prussia. After the Oczakow affair, the Empress of Russia, naturally, regarded him even more favorably than she had previously.<sup>62</sup> Unfortunately this regard for him, like that in England, did not long survive Fox's opinions on the French Revolution.<sup>63</sup> In England, Fox's attitude on foreign matters was viewed by some with suspicion as early as the summer of 1791.<sup>64</sup> In the fall of that year, his old preference for an alliance with Russia and Prussia rather than with Austria was credited as having suspicious implications by a correspondent of Grenville's who believed that Fox was attempting to gain control of the naval power of Europe through alliances with Russia and Prussia and that once he had obtained those alliances<sup>65</sup> he would use them for the benefit of France. There might have been more justification for suspicion in the autumn of 1792 when Fox declared that a renewal of the crusade against France by Prussia and the Empire in the spring might result in the overthrow of their monarchies, and if that was the result, so much the better.<sup>66</sup>

The suspicion of contemporaries and Fox's own attitude were both signs of the times. By 1792 the excesses of the French Revolution were exciting and disturbing many minds in England. While Fox became pro-French with the revolution, others regarded any Anglo-French connection, or English support of France, with

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60. Russell, Memorials, II, 79, 226.

61. Ibid., II, 78.

62. H.M.C. Fortescue Papers, II, 114.

63. Ibid., II, 364.

64. Ibid., II, 144.

65. Ibid., II, 220.

66. Russell, op. cit., II, 307, 308

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misgiving. The attitude of Fox was the logical outcome of the foreign policy he had supported all his life. He not only approved the fall of absolutism in France, but also felt that there was no longer any necessity for England to fear her. France had not only espoused the cause of liberty, but had been weakened in the process. Since Fox had opposed the attempts of George III at personal rule and had welcomed the overthrow of an absolute monarchy in France, it is not surprising that he showed little sympathy to either Habsburg or Hohenzollern ruler - especially when they planned to interfere with a change of government of which he approved. Most important, with a changed and weakened France, their friendship and cooperation were no longer vital to England. Fox spoke truly when he declared that the momentous events in France had changed that kingdom's importance in his eyes. He now regarded France with favor, but others, frightened by the same events, eyed France with increasing alarm. Those who now hated France were bound to distrust those who sympathized with France, particularly such an out-spoken supporter as Charles Fox.

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FOX, THE POLITICIAN

A successful political career depends not only upon talent of genius, but upon the basic principles of the man concerned and the political acumen which enables him to make the fullest use of his abilities in the service of his principles. The talents of Charles Fox have never been questioned, but his principles and his judgement have, both by his contemporaries and by historians. According to George III, Fox never had any principles, and Horace Walpole's friend, Madame du Deffand, agreed, although she granted Fox a good heart.<sup>2</sup> As for Fox's judgement, his aunt, Lady Sarah Lennox,<sup>3</sup> felt that those around him flattered him into making mistakes, while Lord Grenville declared that more than once Fox had been pushed beyond his better judgement by others, and the advantages thus thrown away, he never regained.<sup>4</sup> Wraxall in his Memoirs quotes and agrees with a Mr. Boothby who claimed that although Fox had first-rate talents, he was so deficient in judgement that he never succeeded in attaining any of his objects.<sup>5</sup> How just were these opinions?

There is no doubt that the attitude of George III to Fox was colored by the personal animosity between the two men. The comment by the king on Fox's lack of principles was made in 1780 when Fox had been opposing the policy of the crown and the ministry for several years. The violence of the Whig opposition — and that of Fox particularly — laid them open to charges of upholding rebels

1. Fortescue, George III, V, 97.
2. W.S. Lewis, Horace Walpole's Correspondence with Madame du Deffand and Wiart (New Haven, 1939), IV, 389, 390, 391.
3. Ilchester & Stavordale, Lady Sarah Lennox, II, 20.
4. H.M.C. Fortescue Papers, VII, 333.
5. Wraxall, Memoirs, 343.



and encouraging foreign enemies, but passive resistance would have been useless for they were confronted with the powerful North government, fully supported by the crown. Fox, at least,<sup>7</sup> was genuinely concerned for the fate of English liberties. Sir Gilbert Elliot claimed that the North ministry would have fallen earlier than it did if the opposition had not adopted the un-<sup>8</sup>patriotic course of opposing the American War. Fox was never one to retrain the vituperation of his language but if his denunciations of the war and the ministry at first exasperated the public, such an exasperation leads us to suspect that the people would only have supported a government that would carry on the American War. As long as the government of Lord North was thus supported by public sentiment as well as being backed by George III, there was no possibility of its fall regardless of the actions of the opposition. The Whig opposition could only hope to show the people the error of the North ministry's ways, and how else could this be done than by violent attacks upon that ministry? Even after British defeats turned public opinion to a support of the opposition, the crown alone managed to retain the ministry for some time.

There is a far stronger basis for questioning Fox's judgment and principles on the question of his resignation from the Shelburne cabinet in 1782 than on his attitude to North's ministry. Fox and Shelburne were both Secretaries of State under Rockingham: Fox for foreign affairs and Shelburne for the colonies. The two men had eyed each other with suspicion from the very first of the

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6. May, Constitutional History, I, 409.

7. Russell, Memorials, I, 128; World Famous Orations, IV, 29.

8. Lecky, History of England, IV, 442.



1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year.

2. The second part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year and the progress of the work during the year.

3. The third part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year and the progress of the work during the year.

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7. The seventh part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year and the progress of the work during the year.

peace negotiations, for the division of offices meant the Continental treaties were in the hands of Fox, and the American treaty, if that country was still considered a colony, was under Shelburne.<sup>9</sup> Fox, concerned for England's foreign policy and fearing for American liberty under Shelburne,<sup>10</sup> wished the independence of America to be granted unconditionally, but if such independence was conceded prior to the signing of a peace, then the American treaty would also be under Fox's jurisdiction. This, no doubt, accounts for Shelburne's animosity to Fox. There is some support for the idea that Fox had resolved to resign over his "American controversy" with Shelburne and that he declared this intention before the death<sup>11</sup> of Lord Rockingham. However, on his actual resignation, July 4, 1782, Fox gave as his reason that the appointment of Shelburne as the new head of the ministry was a departure<sup>12</sup> from the principles upon which the Whigs had come into office. In letters to the Duke of Portland, whom Fox had supported for head of the ministry, he<sup>13</sup> wrote in much the same vein. Probably the American question formed the background to his resignation, but there is little doubt that the naming of Shelburne to the Treasury precipitated<sup>14</sup> Fox's action. As Lord Russell points out, Fox chose a poor excuse for resignation. The Duke of Portland could not compare with Lord Shelburne in qualifications for the position, and this alone gave<sup>15</sup> rise to charges of prejudice and jealousy on Fox's part. Walpole

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9. See Chapter V, p. 58.

10. Russell, Memorials, I, 340.

11. Ibid., I, 302, 339, 340, 344.

12. Ibid., I, 338.

13. Ibid., IV, 274, 275.

14. Ibid., I, 354, 355.

15. Ibid., I, 360.



reports that Fox admitted that his resignation might have a bad<sup>16</sup> effect on the peace negotiations. If he realized this, he must have hoped that by leaving the cabinet and taking his followers with him, he could pull down the ministry and form one of his own without Shelburne. This was the occasion when Lady Sarah Lennox, made her observation that "poor dear Charles is so surrounded with flatterers that tempt him to think he alone can overset the whole fabric, that it's in vain to talk."<sup>17</sup> If Fox really believed he could "overset the whole fabric," his resignation makes some sense but he then must be blamed for a lack of political reality.<sup>18</sup> The friends of Fox were not convinced of the wisdom of his action,<sup>19</sup> and they were not the only ones who disapproved. Walpole noted the paucity of Fox's followers as a lesson for those considering resignation, and Fox was forced to agree.<sup>20</sup> Fox may have felt that with Shelburne in office George III would be able to re-institute his policy of personal government<sup>21</sup> and in such a government he would not serve. None the less, as Fox's contemporaries pointed out, he would have been in a better position to prevent the evils<sup>22</sup> he feared if he had remained in the cabinet. There is no doubt<sup>23</sup> that Shelburne and the king wished to oust Fox from the cabinet,<sup>24</sup> but they would have had to find some pretext to do it. Fox, forced from the government, would have been an appealing figure

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16. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XII, 292.

17. Ilchester & Stavordale, Lady Sarah Lennox, II, 20.

18. Russell, Memorials, I, 346, 356, 364.

19. Toynbee, op. cit., XII, 292, 296; Wraxall, Memoirs, 475, 491.

20. Russell, op. cit., I, 346.

21. Ibid., I, 339, 354.

22. Toynbee, op. cit., XII, 296; Wraxall, op. cit., 475

23. Fortescue, George III, VI, 69, 70.

24. Wraxall, op. cit., 476.





and perhaps he would have gained the sympathy and support of parliament and the country. Fox's resignation therefore was a mistake: the most far-reaching mistake of his life. The Tory party had been disrupted by the American War and the fall of Lord North's government. Fox's resignation split the Whigs and led to a rejuvenation of the Tories, and to some extent the king's system, under Pitt. Fox, instead of controlling the situation, left Shelburne in command, with parliament split into three parties: the Shelburne Whigs, the Foxites, and North and his followers. Fox, to correct this, made his disastrous coalition with North,<sup>25</sup> the end result of which was a lifetime of opposition for Fox.

The distrust Charles Fox had of Shelburne not only led to his coalition with North, but added to the infamy of that coalition for Fox in denouncing Shelburne, predicted that the latter was so vile that he even might apply for support to the men recently driven from power - North and his party. This was the course that Fox himself adopted only seven months later.<sup>26</sup> Fox had never disapproved of coalitions as such. In January, 1779, he had attempted to persuade Rockingham to join one by pointing out that it offered an opportunity to restore the Whigs to power by gentle means; a method superior to gaining power by force.<sup>27</sup> He protested that he was not over-eager for office, but felt that the crisis demanded all the efforts of the country's best men.<sup>28</sup> However, he did not favor any administration which included

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25. May, Constitutional History, I, 410, I, 411.

26. Wraxall, Memoirs, 480.

27. Russell, Memorials, I, 174.

28. Ibid., I, 175, 177.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
JANUARY 1, 1925  
TO THE HONORABLE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
SUBJECT: REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE  
RESEARCHES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
DURING THE YEAR 1924  
The Department of Chemistry has during the year 1924  
continued its researches in the field of organic chemistry,  
and has also made considerable progress in the study of  
inorganic chemistry. The following is a summary of the  
work done during the year.

1. Organic Chemistry. The researches of the Department  
of Chemistry during the year 1924 have been directed  
chiefly towards the study of the properties of the  
various classes of organic compounds, and the determination  
of their chemical constitution. The following are the  
principal results of the work done during the year:

(a) The study of the properties of the various classes  
of organic compounds. The following are the principal  
results of the work done during the year:

(b) The determination of the chemical constitution of  
various organic compounds. The following are the principal  
results of the work done during the year:

(c) The study of the properties of the various classes  
of organic compounds. The following are the principal  
results of the work done during the year:

(d) The determination of the chemical constitution of  
various organic compounds. The following are the principal  
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(e) The study of the properties of the various classes  
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(f) The determination of the chemical constitution of  
various organic compounds. The following are the principal  
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(g) The study of the properties of the various classes  
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(h) The determination of the chemical constitution of  
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(i) The study of the properties of the various classes  
of organic compounds. The following are the principal  
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(j) The determination of the chemical constitution of  
various organic compounds. The following are the principal  
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(k) The study of the properties of the various classes  
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(l) The determination of the chemical constitution of  
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(n) The determination of the chemical constitution of  
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(t) The determination of the chemical constitution of  
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(u) The study of the properties of the various classes  
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(v) The determination of the chemical constitution of  
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(w) The study of the properties of the various classes  
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results of the work done during the year:

(x) The determination of the chemical constitution of  
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results of the work done during the year:

(y) The study of the properties of the various classes  
of organic compounds. The following are the principal  
results of the work done during the year:

(z) The determination of the chemical constitution of  
various organic compounds. The following are the principal  
results of the work done during the year:

Very respectfully,  
J. H. H. H.  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

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Lord North. Fox approved of coalitions all his life for in 1806 he wrote that without them nothing could be done against the crown. The desire to curb the power of the crown, which played such a large part in his whole political career, had its part however in the formation of his coalition with North in 1783.

With parliament split in three factions, some sort of a coalition was necessary for a strong government. Lord Shelburne was treating with both North and Fox. Lord North was doing the same, for an agreement between Shelburne and Fox would have overwhelmed him. Fox, fearing that a junction of Shelburne and North would prove to be a triumph for the king, was urged by some friends to join North, while others supported a coalition with Shelburne. Wraxall made an acute observation when he declared that the proscription of Shelburne by Fox, and of North by Pitt, drove Fox and North together. As Pares points out, Fox's offence was not in the alliance itself, but in forgiving North his past sins. If it had been a matter of years instead of months since the invectives were hurled across the house, the coalition might not have done Fox so much harm. As it was, many considered the move to be a complete renunciation of principles by Fox. The comments of Wraxall as a

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29. Fortescue, George III, IV, 368; Russell, Memorials, I, 176.

30. Ibid., IV, 102.

31. See Chapter IV.

32. H.M.C. Fortescue Papers, I, 195; May, Constitutional History I, 413; Pares, George, III, 122-n3.

33. Russell, op. cit., II, 33.

34. Ibid., II, 32, 49.

35. Ibid., II, 32, 40, 41.

36. Ibid., II, 32, 33.

37. Wraxall, Memoirs, 505.

38. Pares, op. cit., 122-n3.

39. Russell, op. cit., II, 38; Wraxall, op. cit., 522, 538, 539.



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follower of North are illuminating. He denounced Fox as inconsistent in joining with North to criticize the peace treaties with France and America, when for years he proclaimed the necessity of any peace. Such an action he thought could only be motivated by ambition. This, too, was the feeling of many members of both the North and Fox parties, and some of Fox's friends were well aware of the risk the party was taking in losing public esteem. As Fox misjudged the general reaction toward the coalition, so he misjudged that of the king. Despite the refusal of the king to grant peerages and the near rupture over settlement of the affairs of the Prince of Wales, Fox refused to take alarm. It does not seem to have occurred to him that having forced his presence on the king, George III would be determined to be rid of him.

While Fox's judgement of the reaction to the coalition was obviously at fault, the question of his lack of principle in forming it is not so clear-cut. Had ambition been his only motive, he could have ignored his distrust of Shelburne as a king's man and joined him with less criticism. North was even more notorious as a king's man than Shelburne, but his complaisant nature made it fairly obvious that Fox would be the leading member of the pair. On top of this, of course, there had never been any personal antagonism between Fox and North, despite their

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40. Wraxall, Memoirs, 520, 521.

41. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XI, 419; Russell, Memorials II, 34-36.

42. Ibid., II, 36-39.

43. Toynbee, op. cit., XI, 419; Wraxall, op. cit., 360; Russell, Life and Times, II, 12.

44. Russell, Memorials, II, 111, 112, 180-182.



political differences. <sup>45</sup> None the less, Fox was uniting with a man whose policy he had opposed bitterly and for many years, and the differences of the parties were such that questions like that of parliamentary reform were left open. Fox was chiefly interested in his "good stout blow to the crown," <sup>46</sup> but in his effort to attain this he used methods which smacked of expediency and which not even success could have justified completely.

However, the hue and cry against the coalition in parliament and the country gradually died down until Fox introduced his <sup>47</sup> famed India Bill. Fox was sincere in his hope that with the India Bill he could do some real good. In writing to a friend he declared that he "never did act more upon principle than at this moment," and that whether he failed or succeeded, he always would <sup>48</sup> be glad that he had made the attempt. Fox was not unaware of the unpopularity and the political risk involved in his effort to reform of the government of India, <sup>49</sup> but he did not seem to be really <sup>50</sup> concerned either for the fate of the bill or the ministry. However, one of his friends, at least, <sup>51</sup> felt that the administration would stand or fall on the issue. The outcry against the measure <sup>52</sup> was great, partly because of Burke's temper, <sup>53</sup> but even more because of the terms of the measure and the suspicion that was

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45. Gibbon, Memoirs, 183; Wraxall, Memoirs, 506; Russell, Memorials, II, 80.  
 46. Modern Orator, II, 150n; Russell, op. cit., II, 51, 52.  
 47. Ibid., II, <sup>44</sup> 71, 83.  
 48. Ibid., II, 178.  
 49. Ibid., II, 178.  
 50. Ibid., II, 43, 178.  
 51. Ibid., II, 185.  
 52. Ibid., II, 178; Russell, Life & Times, II, 35.  
 53. Russell, Memorials, II, <sup>44</sup>.



The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country, and the second part with the specific details of the various districts. The first part is divided into two sections, the first of which deals with the general situation of the country, and the second with the specific details of the various districts. The second part is divided into three sections, the first of which deals with the general situation of the country, and the second with the specific details of the various districts. The third part is divided into four sections, the first of which deals with the general situation of the country, and the second with the specific details of the various districts.

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District		Population		Area	
District 1	Sub-district 1.1	1000	1000	1000	1000
	Sub-district 1.2	2000	2000	2000	2000
District 2	Sub-district 2.1	3000	3000	3000	3000
	Sub-district 2.2	4000	4000	4000	4000
District 3	Sub-district 3.1	5000	5000	5000	5000
	Sub-district 3.2	6000	6000	6000	6000
District 4	Sub-district 4.1	7000	7000	7000	7000
	Sub-district 4.2	8000	8000	8000	8000
District 5	Sub-district 5.1	9000	9000	9000	9000
	Sub-district 5.2	10000	10000	10000	10000

attached to Fox's motives. Fox defended himself well when he pointed out that if he was interested only in retaining power, the safest thing to do was to leave the controversial subject of India alone.<sup>54</sup> Wraxall, who left North's party over the India Bill, commented on the beneficial aspect of many of its regulations, but complained bitterly of the "unwarrantable spirit of ambition, rapacity, and confiscation" it signified, and the power it vested in the administration.<sup>55</sup> The king does not appear to have objected when the bill was first introduced in November, 1783, but at the beginning of December, Lord Thurlow is reported to have informed him that the measure would rob the crown of half its powers.<sup>56</sup> When the bill reached the upper house, the Lords were informed that George III "should deem those who should vote for the bill not only not his friends, but his enemies."<sup>57</sup> Whether or not the king believed Thurlow, he saw an excellent opportunity to rid himself of the coalition, and he took advantage of it. Windham, who reported that George III said he had never approved the bill, declares that every attention had been given in submitting it to him.<sup>58</sup> The explanation may be that as the king wished to avoid personal contact with Fox, and Fox had no desire to encourage royal interference, the measure was not fully understood.<sup>59</sup> Fox's motives in presenting the India Bill can not be seriously questioned, but again his judgement can be. Although

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54.. Russell, Memorials, II, 178.

55. Wraxall, Memoirs, 599, 600.

56. Russell, Life & Times, II, 41.

57. Ibid., II, 42.

58. William Windham, The Windham Papers (London, 1913), I, 55.

59. Pares, George III, 155-nl.



he underestimated the opposition to the measure, the India Bill would probably have passed both Houses successfully had he not misjudged the enmity of George III. This was the mistake which proved his undoing.

Even after his dismissal Fox believed that the coalition<sup>60</sup> could soon regain office. Once more he underestimated the enmity of the crown and the reaction of parliament and the public. Although the India Bill had revived the unpopularity of the coalition, the king's actions in defeating and dismissing his ministers<sup>61</sup> did arouse public surprise and alarm. Fox genuinely abhorred the use made of secret influence,<sup>62</sup> and probably feared what it could mean to parliament. If he had judged his position correctly, he might have been successful in regaining office, but at every turn he seemed to make the wrong choice.<sup>63</sup> In the end he only made permanent the divisions resulting from his resignation in 1782. Pitt and Fox, the two most brilliant men in parliament, were separated for the remainder of their lives, the Whigs were routed and the Tories in power for the next half century and Fox was faced with twenty years of opposition and frustration.

Generally speaking, the defeats Fox had suffered up until this time had not been the result of lack of principle, but rather lack of sound political judgement. The only occasion when his motives can be questioned seriously is the struggle over the regency in 1788. It had been obvious since the Prince of Wales

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60. Russell, Memorials, II, 189, 190.

61. Ibid., II, 187.

62. Russell, Life and Times, II, 77.

63. See Chapter IV, p. 44-45.





had gravitated, in true Hanoverian manner, to the side of the opposition, that once upon the throne he would call the Whigs to power. Thus in 1788, when George III succumbed to insanity, Pitt tried to delay a regency while Fox attempted to force immediate recognition of the Prince of Wales as Regent.<sup>64</sup> Fox's cause was not a poor one. The stigma attached to this struggle with Pitt arose from the fact that in his eagerness, Fox placed not only himself but also his party in a false position.<sup>65</sup>

George III, though acrimonious, showed insight when he noted Fox's lack of restraint and sound judgement.<sup>66</sup> Wraxall showed equal penetration in his comment that Fox's lack of moderation sentenced him to perpetual exclusion from office.<sup>67</sup> Certainly Fox's lack of restraint had a powerful effect on his career. His impetuosity had much to do with his unpopularity at the beginning of his career; his lack of restraint during the American War added to the odium of his coalition with North; it played at least a part in his resignation from the Shelburne cabinet in 1782, and had much to do with his unfortunate stand during the Regency affair. Fox himself considered the judgement of friends "better than my own, with respect to what regards myself in political matters."<sup>68</sup> However, to a friend he declared that he did "foresee possible cases where I am determined to act against all the advice that they are likely to give me,"<sup>69</sup> Fox did not intend to act

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64. Parliamentary Debates, XLIX, 23.

65. See Chapter IV, p. 47-49

66. Fortescue, George III, III, 70; Russell, Life and Times, II, 5.

67. Wraxall, Memoirs, 405.

68. Russell, Memorials, II, 221.

69. Ibid., I, 147.



upon advice which countered his principles, for in 1783 he had written, "it is no hypocrisy...to say that the consciousness of having always acted upon principle in public matters, and my determination always to do so, is the great comfort of my life."<sup>70</sup> In most cases he did,<sup>71</sup> for the liberal ideals he espoused during and before the American war, he retained. There were times when his political actions, particularly those of 1782 and 1783, had an air of expediency about them. However, Fox had not conveniently forgotten his beliefs in order to gain power. He was not the brand of political philosopher who could consider his principles against the background of a dispassionate view of events. He was incapable of being disinterested for he was an able party leader. He was a political thinker in that he developed his ideas on the method and end of government, but he was in the midst of the political arena. In the way that he met each event as it came along and attempted to fit it into the pattern of his beliefs, he was an opportunist, and hence frequently appeared to be inconsistent. It was unfortunate that he faced the years of the French Revolution with such a background, for had his motives been always above suspicion, his views during the coming years might have met with less suspicion and might have carried more weight.

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70. Russell, Memorials, II, 178.

71. The Regency is an exception for although Fox was acting upon the belief of the rights of the Prince of Wales and convinced himself of the justice of the cause (see Ch. IV, p. 49), the belief was a reversal of his usual attitude, and his motives could not be considered of the highest.





## SECTION II

### THE YEARS OF

### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION



ENGLAND AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

During the winter of 1788-1789 the English people had little time to notice the stirrings of their neighbors across the English Channel. The thoughts of England were turned to their own Regency Crisis as Whig and Tory scurried for medical opinion that the king would, or would not, remain insane. George III settled the matter himself, as he was wont to do, by recovering, and the country settled back to watch the royal princes and a good many others attempt to justify their conduct in the eyes of the king and queen. The illness of the king had brought a great surge of loyalty toward the crown on the part of the English public, and on the king's recovery popular attention was focussed on the numerous celebrations to mark the event. There were balls, illuminations and respectful addresses from citizens. Loyal English ladies adorned their gowns and boating clothes with the bold letters, "God Save the King." With the arrival of warmer weather, the king retired to the seaside to complete his recovery and his progress there was followed with minute interest. No doubt such diversions had much to do with English apathy to the beginnings of the French Revolution. Even the fall of the Bastille in July did not bring any general realization of the import of events in France although that event did quicken English interest.

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1. Lecky, History of England, VI, 375.
  2. Annual Register, 1789, 202, 205, 249ff.
  3. Ibid., 1789, 252, 264.
  4. Ibid., 1789, 260ff.
  5. Philip Anthony Brown, The French Revolution in English History (London, 1918), 27; Lecky, op. cit., VI, 368.





To the general public, the opening days of the French Revolution meant that a troublesome neighbor would be unconcerned with European affairs for a time — an unconcern that was all to the good of England and the cause of peace. In most quarters this feeling of relief was accompanied by a languid but sincere pleasure at the gain in liberty for the French people.<sup>6</sup>

To the liberal-minded of England, the 14th of July marked the dawn of a promising new era. The English poets Cowper, Blake, Coleridge and Wordsworth greeted the changes in France with enthusiasm.<sup>7</sup> The more advanced Whigs openly rejoiced. Charles Fox welcomed the capture of the Bastille with his famous comment, "How much the greatest event it is that ever happened in the world! and how much the best!"<sup>8</sup> Lord Stanhope agreed with this sentiment,<sup>9</sup> as did Lord Shelburne.<sup>10</sup>

The French Revolution was welcomed even more heartily by the English dissenters, in whom it evoked a deep enthusiasm, and by the English reformers, who looked upon the new France as an ally to their cause.<sup>11</sup> The contrast between the victory of religious toleration in France and the position of the dissenters in England made a tremendous impression on those English whose rights were restricted because of their religious views.<sup>12</sup>

The renewed hopes of the nonconformists were expressed in

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6. Annual Register, 1789, 63; Lecky, History of England, VI, 365.
  7. Brown, French Revolution in England, 32.
  8. Lecky, op. cit., VI, 367.
  9. Russell, Memorials, II, 296.
  10. Ghita Stanhope, G.P. Gooch, The Life of Charles, Third Earl Stanhope (London, 1914), 86; Fitzmaurice, Shelburne, II, 378.
  11. Lecky, op. cit., VI, 371, 372, 374.
  12. Brown, op. cit., 29.

*[Faint handwritten notes, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]*



November, 1789, at a meeting of the London Revolution Society. The group consisted mostly of dissenters -- including a number of distinguished members -- and had long upheld the belief that civil authority was derived from the people. Thus it was not surprising that at the society's annual celebration of the English Revolution of 1688, a message of congratulation was drawn up to the French National Assembly, expressing the hope for the general reformation of all Europe.<sup>13</sup> This same hope was expressed by a fellow member, the famous Unitarian minister, Dr. Price. In a sermon that attracted widespread attention he thanked God that he had lived to see thirty million people spurning slavery and leading their king in triumph.<sup>14</sup> The message of congratulation was followed by similar messages from other English democratic societies, thus beginning the correspondence between the English organizations and the French revolutionaries. Both the sermon and the congratulations marked the beginning of an agitation that was to evoke a good deal of opposition from the government and from the public.<sup>15</sup>

Such enthusiasm, however, was far from universal. Pitt avoided committing himself but he did say, in July, 1789, that the events in France were fast making that country an object for compassion. He did not, at that time, fear that the dangerous democratic opinions inflaming France would spread across the Channel. While he was glad to see France weakened, he was really more interested

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13. Brown, French Revolution in England, 25; Lecky, History of England, VI, 373.

14. Ibid., VI, 373.

15. Ibid., VI, 373.





in the Belgian revolt against Emperor Joseph than he was in  
<sup>16</sup>  
 French events.

Men like George Selwyn, from the first, considered that France was in a "lawless and abominable confusion" and feared  
<sup>17</sup>  
 that that confusion might spread. Horace Walpole, too, voiced  
<sup>18</sup>  
 some apprehensions.

English opinions about the Revolution then, at the beginning were mostly favourable although there were some people who were alarmed by events across the Channel. As the summer passed and fall was over, opinion began to change, although the moderate  
<sup>19</sup>  
 press was still favourable to the Revolution until late in 1789. However, the Revolution had excited a powerful antagonist in Edmund Burke who in September wrote of France as "a country where the people, along with their political servitude, have  
<sup>20</sup>  
 thrown off the Yoke of Laws and morals." With the forced move of the French royal family from Versailles to Paris, and Dr. Price's reference to this in his talk of "leading the king", Burke definitely became frightened. Henceforth he saw any attempt at English reform as the beginning of a revolution in England  
<sup>21</sup>  
 similar to that being experienced in France.

Actually, there seems to have been little danger of an English imitation of events in France. The king had regained his popularity, the administration was stable, the country was in a

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- 16. J.Holland Rose, William Pitt and the National Revival (London, 1912), 542, 543, 548.
  - 17. H.M.C. Carlisle Papers, 663.
  - 18. Lewis, Walpole Letters, XI, 28.
  - 19. Wright, Caricature History, 439.
  - 20. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 90.
  - 21. Brown, French Revolution in England, 77.





good financial position, and there is little evidence suggesting the presence in England of the discontents that brought  
<sup>22</sup>  
 on the trouble in France.

Burke, however, did not seem to see this. He saw only what he took to be a real danger for the English constitution and he set out to convince others that he was right. Accordingly, in February of 1790, he gave the first of his many great orations  
<sup>23</sup>  
 on the French Revolution in parliament. Pitt and many other  
<sup>24</sup>  
 members gave full approval. Some of the government members who supported Burke may have been motivated by a desire to split the Whig opposition but others who also did so expressed the vague but growing fear in many English quarters that England might  
<sup>25</sup>  
 follow the example of France. This uneasiness was also shown by the court proscription of references to French politics upon  
<sup>26</sup>  
 the stage. Growing English distrust was fostered by the radical press, whose pamphlets were reported to be teeming with libels  
<sup>27</sup>  
 on the English constitution.

The growing fears were shown, too, by the reaction of parliament to any liberal measure. The small majority that had defeated a motion in 1789 for a reconsideration of the Test and Corporation Acts, which restricted the civil rights of dissenters, was so encouraging that in March, 1790, Charles Fox introduced a motion to repeal the acts.  
<sup>28</sup>  
 Although Fox protested that

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22. Lecky, History of England, VI, 375, 376.

23. Parliamentary Debates, LI, 80ff.

24. Annual Register, 1790, 65, 71.

25. Lecky, op. cit., VI, 388.

26. Wright, Caricature History, 440.

27. Annual Register, 1790, 65.

28. Ibid., 1790, 72.



[illegible]

French politics had nothing to do with the question, the prejudice excited by the correspondence of leading dissenters with the revolutionaries across the Channel, and the fear that a repeal of the acts would lead to the destruction of the established church, had its effect.<sup>30</sup> Edmund Burke opposed the motion for repeal on the basis that many dissenters -- and he cited Price and Priestley -- were men of dangerous principles, and the bill was defeated by a large majority.<sup>31</sup> A few days after the introduction of Fox's motion, Flood brought in a measure for the reform of parliament. The defeat of this, too, stemmed from the influence of events in France, for the ex-reformer Windham opposed the bill with his oft-quoted cry,<sup>32</sup> "What, would...you...repair your house in this hurricane season?" This was the first sign Windham gave of the changing general attitude, and his views were supported by another erstwhile reformer, Pitt.<sup>33</sup> The size of the opposition to these two bills illustrated the trend toward the reaction against liberalism that was to last for forty years.

Parliament was dissolved in June of 1790, and the Annual Register for that year comments on the political languor that accompanied the ensuing election in most districts, and which spread throughout the country during the summer.<sup>34</sup> Evidently events in France diminished the seeming importance of domestic affairs. However,

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29. Annual Register, 1790, 73.

30. Ibid., 1790, 72.

31. Ibid., 1790, 76, 77.

32. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 91.

33. Ibid., I, 91.

34. Annual Register, 1790, 215.

	(	)	=	a
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p	(	)	=	e
f	(	)	=	i
x	(	)	=	o
s	(	)	=	u



there was a growing suspicion of the patriotism of the opposition members in parliament,<sup>35</sup> and in the minds of those who had expressed dislike of the revolution the year before, there was an increasing terror at events in France.<sup>36</sup> Strangely enough, George III had made no comment on the revolution in his letters to his first minister, Pitt, until late in March, 1790,<sup>37</sup> and when parliament reconvened in November, 1790, the speech from the throne, again as in 1789, took no cognizance of affairs in France other than an implied comment in speaking of the danger to the Netherlands from France.<sup>38</sup> Charles Fox picked this up to ask why France had suddenly become an object of terror,<sup>39</sup> but otherwise parliament appeared to be unconcerned with France's internal affairs, and the debates in the Commons centred mainly on the Nootka Sound Convention with Spain, and the effect of dissolution of the previous summer on the impeachment of Warren Hastings.<sup>40</sup> However, the events across the Channel had their effect in the months that followed. In the spring of 1791 a motion for the repeal of the Test Act for Scotland, and a motion regarding the abolition of the Slave Trade, were both heavily defeated in the growing reaction against liberalism,<sup>41</sup> although a Catholic Relief Bill of very limited scope was passed<sup>42</sup> and Fox's Libel Bill was approved in principle.<sup>43</sup> Reference to French affairs found an increasing place in the debates, even in those concerning an election petition and the

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35. Annual Register, 1790, 215.

36. Lewis, Walpole Letters, XI, 86; H.M.C. Carlisle Papers, 681.

37. Rose, Pitt, and the National Revival, 549, 550.

38. Annual Register, 1791, 221, 222.

39. Ibid., 1791, 222.

40. Ibid., 1791, 223ff.

41. Ibid., 1791, 243-246, 248, 249.

42. Ibid., 1791, 247.

43. Ibid., 1791, 272.





discussion of Pitt's policy in the Ozachow crisis with Russia.

The affairs of France not only had their effect on legislative matters in England but also on English party politics. Two outstanding members of the Whig opposition, Charles Fox and Edmund Burke, had not only held opposing views on the French Revolution since its inception, but in the spring of 1791 seemed destined to clash on the matter in parliament. The quarrel came to a head in May and, after an acrimonious and violent debate between the two men, their long association was declared to be at an end by Burke. The quarrel was an ominous sign for future Whig unity, but at the time sympathy was generally with Fox.<sup>45</sup> Burke, however, did not give up his attempt to convert his colleagues to his views on the French government and its menace to England. During the summer he published his Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs and at the end of 1791, his Thoughts on French Affairs. Burke's cause was aided by the French themselves. The flight and recapture of the French king and queen in June, the July massacre, the continued persecution of the clergy and the war cries in the French assembly, were not without their effect in England. By the time parliament opened again in January, 1792, events in France pervaded everyday life in England and they played a major role in the debates of the session.<sup>46</sup>

The concern over French affairs and the anti-liberalism

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44. Annual Register, 1791, 255; Parliamentary Debates, LIII, 334.  
 45. Ibid., 1791, 267; Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XLV, 430; XV, 32, 33, 43; The Modern Orator II, 400.  
 46. Annual Register, 1792, 126ff.



evinced in parliament had its counterpart among the general public - and much of that reaction could be traced back to the influence of Edmund Burke. Fired by Dr. Price's sermon of November, 1789, and fed by the first-hand accounts of emigrants from France, Burke's humanitarianism and his reverence for the existing order of society inspired his Reflections on the Revolution in France, which he published in November, 1790. The book was received with enthusiasm in the upper circles of England, and a forecast of the Whig split was to be found in the approval the work gained from prominent Whigs.<sup>47</sup> George III declared that every gentleman should read the Reflections.<sup>48</sup> Horace Walpole claimed the book to be a fatal blow to the French Revolution and to sedition in England.<sup>49</sup> Evidently Burke's denunciation did not dampen the spirits of the illustrious Dr. Price for he was reported to have proposed a toast that the English parliament might become a national assembly and the English peerage a thing of the past.<sup>50</sup> But the dissenting leadership of the reform movement was soon to be replaced by a new leadership inspired by Tom Paine.

One result of Burke's work was the magnitude of the replies. The first to appear was Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Man.<sup>51</sup> The most influential, however, was Thomas Paine's Rights of Man, the first part of which was published in February

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47. Lecky, History of England, VI, 422; Windham, Windham Papers, I, 96.

48. John Morley, Burke (London, 1879), 152.

49. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XIV, 313, 345.

50. Ibid., XIV, 316.

51. Brown, French Revolution in England. 41.





1791. Paine's book expounded a democratic theory of government<sup>52</sup> which had an unprecedented influence on the reform movement.

In the early 'eighties the chief concern of the reformers had been the limitation of the power of the crown, but with the example of French civil and religious equality, the English movement became more democratic.<sup>53</sup> During the first months the leadership fell to the dissenting intellectuals such as Price and Priestley, for the dissenters had been petitioning for their rights as citizens since 1787.<sup>54</sup> However, the mounting opposition in England to the French Revolution and to English reform soon frightened the dissenters.<sup>55</sup> Burke's attacks on the principles and aims of the dissenters probably had a great influence on the direction this opposition took. The caricaturists and ballad writers of the day were attacking the attitude of the dissenters toward the French Revolution as early as February, 1790.<sup>56</sup> This opposition came to a dramatic climax in the summer of 1791. The Birmingham "Friends of Freedom Society" celebrated the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille with a dinner, and the occasion was used by a mob to destroy the chapel and homes of many prominent dissenters, including the home of Priestley. The authorities stood by until the inflamed spirit of the mob had nearly blown itself out.<sup>57</sup> The damage that resulted from the riots was tremendous, but though a few of the rioters were tried and executed,<sup>58</sup> the official attitude was generally lenient, and many

52. Brown, French Revolution in England, 71; Annual Register, 1792, 172.

53. Butler, Reform Bill, 16.

54. Lecky, History of England, VI, 371-374

55. Brown, op.cit., 82; Annual Register, 1790, 72.

56. Wright, Caricature History, 449, 450.

57. Annual Register, 1791, 28.

58. Ibid., 1791, 34, 36, 37.





government supporters considered the riots to be a good lesson  
 to all reformers.<sup>59</sup> The Birmingham Riots were a sign of the  
 times: they illustrated the growing opposition to reform, and  
 they heralded a change in the character of the reform move-  
 ment.<sup>60</sup> The dissenters were generally moderate men and as public  
 and governmental opposition to reform stiffened, they were re-  
 placed in the reform movement by hardier members. The latter  
 part of 1791 and the early months of 1792 saw the revival of  
 the reform societies of the 'eighties and the beginning of new  
 organizations.<sup>61</sup> With these societies, the reform agitation took  
 on a more radical character. The movement had for its inspir-  
 ation the French Revolution, and for its principles, Tom Paine's  
 theories of government.<sup>62</sup>

Despite the agitation both in and outside parliament over  
 French affairs and their influence in England, Pitt was fore-  
 casting peace and domestic tranquility for England early in 1792.<sup>63</sup>  
 Indeed, England's official attitude toward France had been one of  
 strict and proper neutrality from the start of the French Revolu-  
 tion, and the government was evidently determined to maintain this  
 position.<sup>64</sup> Certainly Pitt did not appear to fear either French ex-  
 ternal policy or internal disturbances in England in February,  
 1792.<sup>65</sup> He apparently still favored English neutrality when France  
 went to war with Austria a month later.<sup>66</sup> Others, however,

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59. Brown, French Revolution in England, 81; H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 133, 140.

60. Brown, op. cit., 61.

61. Ibid., 53ff.

62. Ibid., 70, 71. A more detailed account of the development of the reform movement will be given in Chapter XI.

63. Annual Register, 1792, 143, 144.

64. Lecky, History of England, VI, 510-520.

65. Annual Register, 1792, 143, 144.

66. Lecky, op. cit., VII, 2.





had long felt with Burke that there was danger of the French contamination spreading, although some believed that the English had enough good sense to support their government in a critical time even though they disapproved of its policies.<sup>67</sup> The fact that the dire forecasts voiced by Burke in his Reflections were being vindicated by events in France, was not without its<sup>68</sup> effect. Opinion in England was not only divided on the merits of the French Revolution but it was splitting along the same lines in domestic matters, for the influence of French affairs was touching every facet of life. The full depth and bitterness of the division of opinion in England did not really make itself felt until later in 1792, but the tone had been sounded in 1791 in the quarrel of Edmund Burke and Charles Fox.

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67. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 663; H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 58.

68. Lecky, History of England, VI, 470, 471.

and from 1912 to 1913, the same was done in the same manner.

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1. The results of the investigation are as follows:

During the debate on the army estimates in 1790, Charles Fox told the House of Commons that if he compared all the political knowledge he had gained from books, from science, and from the world, with what he had gained from Edmund Burke, he would not know to which he owed the greater debt. Indeed, the friendship of Fox and Burke was of the finest type, formed upon mutual respect and admiration for the other's ability, and bound by the love each had for justice and liberty. Yet, despite this friendship, from the first their lives presented a study in contrast. Burke was a man who through sheer ability had pulled himself up to the fringes of the exclusive Whig circle. Fox had been born to the aristocracy and had only to choose his political allies. While Fox exemplified the dissolution of the age, Burke represented all that was still upright and irreproachable. Fox, the amiable, attracted friendship and love; Burke, the irascible, inspired respect and admiration. Even in debate the two men differed, for Thurlow reports that while Fox spoke to the House, Burke seemed to talk to himself. However, the superficial characteristics of each had little, if any, effect upon the friendship of Fox and Burke until the French Revolution highlighted the basic divergence in their views.

There appears to be no record of the early acquaintance of the two men, but they must have met when Fox was little more than a boy, for in 1791 their friendship was spoken of as

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1. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 94, 95.

2. Wraxall, Memoirs, 359.

3. Robert Gore-Browne, Chancellor Thurlow, (London, 1953), 83.





one of "five and twenty years." They probably did not become close friends until after Fox left the North government in 1774, but by 1777 Burke was writing to Fox as a good friend, urging him to join the Whig party.<sup>5</sup> The American War and the struggle against the personal government of George III cemented their relationship just as those same episodes bound Fox politically to the Whigs. It was natural, too, that Burke should have a strong influence in molding the first liberal ideas of Charles Fox. Fox was not only much younger than Burke in years, but, also in political experience and he was less acquainted with the realm of political thought. Fox needed little persuasion to<sup>6</sup> adopt a liberal attitude in matters of religious toleration, but Burke exerted a definite influence upon Fox's ideas on parliamentary reform. Burke's plan for economic reform was among the first reform measures supported by Fox, and Burke's concept of virtual representation of the people in parliament, as opposed to specific representation, was supported by Fox for<sup>7</sup> many years. However, Fox allowed a wider scope than Burke in the practice of his principle of parliamentary reform and, while the two men did not quarrel personally on the subject, it formed the only major disagreement between Fox and Burke during the 1780's. When Fox supported a motion for triennial parliaments in 1780, Burke was strongly opposed.<sup>8</sup> In 1782, when Fox supported Pitt's motion for reform, Burke attacked Pitt in a "scream of passion", declaring that parliament was and always had been precisely what it ought to be, and that all people who supported

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4. Annual Register, 1791, 265.

5. Russell, Memorials, I, 138.

6. See Chapter III.

7. See Chapter IV, 40, 52.

8. Russell, Memorials, I, 205.





a change in the representation wished to overturn the constitution.<sup>9</sup>

Although Burke retained some of his influence on Fox's ideas during the 'eighties, Fox no longer followed his leadership in many political matters. Both men had obtained a high degree of eminence by the end of the American War, but Fox was the more acceptable to the Whigs in matters of political leadership, probably for both social and temperamental reasons. At least on matters of party policy, Fox now led and Burke followed. On Fox's resignation from the cabinet after the death of Rockingham in 1782, a report claimed that Burke would have been happy to retain his position as paymaster but would not separate from Fox.<sup>10</sup> While this rumor suggests Fox's new importance in the partnership, its truth can be doubted, for Burke poured abuse upon Shelburne once he was out of office.<sup>11</sup> There is a possibility, supported by Burke's long-standing interest in India, that he was the originator of the India Bill that was presented by the Fox-North coalition.<sup>12</sup> However, Fox brought the motion to parliament and the bill was generally considered to have been planned by him. Even in the impeachment of Hastings, which Burke did instigate,<sup>13</sup> he relied much on the judgement of Fox. Certainly Burke followed Fox's views in the factious Whig opposition to Pitt's Irish commercial bills and to the commercial treaty with France in 1785 and 1786.<sup>14</sup> Evidently Burke was not consulted by Fox on the policy

9. Russell, Memorials, I, 257.

10. Wraxall, Memoirs, 473.

11. John Morley, Burke (London, 1879), 100.

12. Ibid., 102.

13. Russell, Memorials, II, 26.

14. Morley, Burke, 125, 127.





to be followed by the party during the Regency crisis,<sup>15</sup> nor was  
 he included in the proposed Whig cabinet.<sup>16</sup> Burke's violence  
 during the Regency debates had brought strong public disapproval  
 as well as distress within the party and one biographer of  
 Burke suggests that the seeds of discontent were sown between  
 Fox and Burke at this time.<sup>17</sup>

While the Regency crisis may have left both Fox and Burke  
 slightly dissatisfied with each other, a suggestion of an open  
 break between the two would have met with derision until the  
 advent of the French Revolution. Only through such a violent  
 upheaval, and the English emotional reaction from it, could the  
 wide divergence in the liberalism of Fox and that of Burke be-  
 come clearly evident, and a matter of importance. The cracks  
 in the solid front long presented by the two men then were not  
 slow in appearing. Fox had known France well since his youth  
 when he had travelled among her aristocratic circles. Although  
 he had no use for the despotic government of the Bourbon monarchy,  
 he thought highly of the French themselves and praised the country  
 as an enlightened nation during a debate in the British House of  
 Commons on the eve of the French Revolution.<sup>18</sup> While Fox's conn-  
 ections in France had always been with her aristocracy, his love  
 of liberty and justice placed him on the side of the people at  
 the start of the Revolution. A few days before the fall of the

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15. Morley, Burke, 137.

16. Russell, Memorials, IV, 283.

17. Morley, Burke, 140-142; Wraxall, Memoirs, 356. In May, 1789,  
 Burke mentioned that they seldom met. At that time Fox had  
 evidently been annoyed by some tactical move that Burke had  
 made in parliament. (Russell, Memorials, II, 293-295).

18. Parliamentary Debates, LI, 161.





Bastille in July, 1789, Fox noted hopefully in the Commons that France might gain political freedom through her ruined finances.<sup>19</sup> Following the taking of the Bastille by the people<sup>20</sup> of Paris there was no doubt as to where his sympathy lay. At the same time there was little doubt of Burke's antipathy to the Revolution, although he made no comment in parliament until early in 1790. Burke never seems to have evinced any sympathy for the aspirations of the French people for political and social liberty. During the summer of 1789 he expressed<sup>21</sup> doubt and fear of the Parisian mob. In September his dislike of the events in France was voiced in a letter to Windham in which he spoke of the "mob of constituents" ready to hang the members of the National Assembly should they move toward moderation.<sup>22</sup> Burke's overweening concern was for the "precarious<sup>23</sup> situation" of the people of property. He took this attitude when France still appeared to be headed toward a constitutional monarchy and while English sentiments were still fairly sympathetic.<sup>24</sup>

Events in France were brought forcibly to the attention of parliament during the discussion of the army estimates early in February, 1790. Fox, who was never one to hide his opinions, declared that while he opposed any increase in the army on the grounds of economy, there had never been a time

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19. Parliamentary Debates, Ll, 391.

20. Russell, Memorials, II, 296.

21. Lecky, History of England, VI, 378; H.M.C., The Manuscripts and Correspondence of James, First Earl of Charlemont (London, 1894), II, 106.

22. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 90.

23. Ibid., I, 91.

24. See Chapter VII, 80, 81, 82.





when he was less concerned over an increase in the army for fear of endangering the constitution. France had proved the fears of standing armies to be unfounded by showing "that a man, by becoming a soldier, did not cease to be a citizen."<sup>25</sup> He declared that there was no longer reason to fear French designs upon English territory, for France was only concerned with forming her new constitution and that constitution would probably make her a better neighbor.<sup>26</sup> It would have been too much to expect a man of Burke's temperament and character to ignore this declaration. When the debate was resumed, Burke presented his views on the French situation in bold and vigorous words. At the moment, he declared, there was no danger to Europe from France because France had become a political nonentity. Since the previous summer the French had shown themselves to be able architects of ruin. The danger was, according to Burke, that other countries might follow her example as they had done in previous times.<sup>27</sup> This fear that England might follow France down the path to what he considered to be ruin was with Burke from this time on, and the evident stability of the English system of government played no part in his consideration of the French Revolution. During this same debate Burke voiced the basic reasons for his disapproval of the changes in France: his horror at the events

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25. Parliamentary Debates, L11, 55.

26. Ibid., L11, 57.

27. Ibid., L11, 80n, 81n, 82n.





themselves; his concern over the disruption of the rights to property (particularly those of the church); his anger at the destruction of authority and of the old French constitution.<sup>28</sup> Burke was aghast at the disruption of the old order of society and his reaction revealed his basic conservatism. The shock with which Burke viewed the overturn of one long-established system of government prevented him from regarding the situation in England rationally or with detachment. During the debates on the army estimates in 1790 he warned the House that there were men in England prepared to change the sacred English constitution.<sup>29</sup> Nor did he hesitate to attack Fox for his "citizen-soldier" remark which had introduced the subject of France into the debate. Burke was not yet really ready to quarrel with Fox on the subject of France, and he put down Fox's French enthusiasm to a mistaken zeal of liberty, but it was obvious that he would not allow friendship to interfere with his basic beliefs. Burke warned that he was opposed so strongly to democracy that he would join even his enemies to defeat a scheme for such a system in England.<sup>30</sup> There was an ominous sound to Burke's declaration and Fox, seeing the danger, answered him with restraint and affection.<sup>31</sup> Fox defended his stand upon French affairs but he pointed out that he neither approved of democracy nor of any form of absolute government. In exulting over events in France, he declared, he was paying tribute to those who, through

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28. Parliamentary Debates, L11, 84n.

29. Ibid., L11, 93.

30. Ibid., L11, 83n.

31. Ibid., L11, 94, 95.





feeling for their countrymen, had disobeyed despotic commands and espoused the cause of liberty. Fox pointed out that while he did not disapprove of all constitutional change in England,<sup>32</sup> he would not support any dangerous moves. He carefully explained that he was not unconcerned over the bloodshed the revolution had brought to France but viewed it with compassion<sup>33</sup> because of the former French despotism. Burke was quite satisfied with the explanation and the disagreement would have ended on an amiable note had not Sheridan leapt to his feet in violent opposition to Burke's ideas and to all that Burke<sup>34</sup> had said during the debate. The fury of Sheridan unleashed a storm, for Burke attacked him in return and concluded by<sup>35</sup> declaring their friendship to be at an end. The whole debate was significant for more than the dramatic incidents with which the discussion provided the House. The debate was the first public disagreement between Burke and Fox on the French Revolution. While an outright quarrel had been averted, the debate showed the great divergence in the opinions of Fox and Burke on political reform. Their differences, along with the break between Burke and Sheridan, sounded a threatening note to the relationship of the two old friends and to the future unity of the Whig Party.

There could be little hope that the startling affairs of France would be ignored by English politicians. Less than a

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32. Parliamentary Debates, L11, 95.

33. Ibid., L11, 96.

34. Ibid., L11, 98.

35. Ibid., L11, 100.

[illegible]

month after the army debates French events again intruded upon British domestic affairs. The occasion was the introduction by Fox on March 2, 1790, of a bill to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts. In the past Fox and Burke had joined forces in supporting greater indulgence toward the Roman Catholics.<sup>36</sup> Burke had always denounced the Test Act.<sup>37</sup> Fox, in May of 1789, had supported Beaufoy's motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. He was convinced that religion should be separated from politics and, as far as he was concerned, the dissenters had long proved their loyalty to the British Constitution.<sup>38</sup> In September, 1789, Burke was eager for Fox to draw the dissenters within the Whig fold for, as he pointed out, they had considerable influence at elections.<sup>39</sup> Burke's urging may have influenced Fox to take up the cause of the dissenters for, while Fox had a sincere belief in the justice of their complaints, the dissenters had not always held him in high regard.<sup>40</sup> Fox urged the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in the spring of 1790 on much the same basis that he had supported the repeal the previous year - the justice of the dissenting cause and a defence of their loyalty - but this time he specifically defended the loyalty of the leading dissenters, Doctors Price and Priestley.<sup>41</sup> Fox pointed out that, although any innovations in England were claimed to be dangerous

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36. Russell, Memorials, I, 153; Morley, Burke, 77.

37. Morley, Burke, 151.

38. Parliamentary Debates, LI, 118 ff.

39. Russell, Memorials, II, 296.

40. In 1784 the dissenters had supported Pitt and only turned to Fox when Pitt deserted them. (Russell, Memorials, II, 297).

41. Parliamentary Debates, LI, 117ff: LII, 140ff.





because of the upset in France, the dissenters had first applied<sup>42</sup> for relief before the start of the French Revolution. This argument had no effect upon Burke. To the consternation of his associates, he switched from his long policy of toleration and<sup>43</sup> opposed the motion. While he defended Fox against Pitt's sneers that with Fox in power the civil constitution of England would be<sup>44</sup> endangered, Burke was obviously less certain than before that a gain in political rights by the dissenters would leave the constitution intact. He declared that he had absented himself on two previous occasions when the motion had been before the house (probably in 1787 and 1789) because he could not make up his<sup>45</sup> mind on the question. Now, he founded his opposition to repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts on the grounds that the dissenters were forming their case on the abstract principle of "natural rights." Burke declared that he had always disliked abstract principles and the one of the "natural rights" of the people claimed to supersede society and broke the bonds tying<sup>46</sup> the present to past experience. During his speech Burke showed how much events in France, particularly those that had despoiled the church of her property, were preying upon his mind. He spoke of his reverence for the established church in England and his present apprehension that the dissenters, whom he had supported<sup>47</sup> in former years, might attempt to do away with that establishment.

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42. Parliamentary Debates, L11, 148.

43. Morley, Burke, 151.

44. Parliamentary Debates, L11, 179.

45. Ibid., L11, 178.

46. Ibid., L11, 180.

47. Ibid., L11, 181.

[illegible]

Burke linked the aims of the English dissenters to those of the French revolutionaries, accusing the dissenters of being men of dangerous principles and supplementing this contention with a personal attack on Price and Priestley. Had the question been moved ten years previously, Burke declared, he should have supported the motion which he now considered to be imprudent.<sup>48</sup> While Burke's language was fairly moderate, his stand on the question of repeal must have had a great influence. He not only linked the dissenters and the French revolutionaries in the eyes of many people, but he gave the first public example of a man long considered to be a liberal moving towards conservatism and reaction. Many members of parliament evidently followed his lead on this occasion, for the motion for repeal, which had been lost by such a small majority in 1789, was defeated 294 to 105 in 1790.<sup>49</sup>

While Fox had never been radical in his views on parliamentary reform, he had been willing for many years to support more sweeping reform measures than Burke.<sup>50</sup> Therefore it was not surprising that while Burke opposed Flood's motion for parliamentary reform in March, 1790, Fox supported the move. Burke's opposition was based, as usual, on his reverence for traditional and existing forms of government,<sup>51</sup> but when the motion was first introduced he commented on the critical situation in Europe, warning that a "wild storm" was gathering and expressing the hope

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48. Parliamentary Debates, L11, 182-186.

49. Annual Register, 1790, 77.

50. See supra Chapter IV: Morley, Burke, 58, 59.

51. Parliamentary Debates, L11, 216, 217.





that members of parliament would be vigilant in preserving the present form of English government.<sup>52</sup> Fox, while admitting that the majority of people were not too anxious for a reform of parliament at that time, saw no reason for panic in England on the question of reform because of recent events in France.<sup>53</sup>

When Windham made his famous comment on the danger of repairing a house in the hurricane season during the debate,<sup>54</sup> Fox replied succinctly that he could think of no better time.<sup>55</sup> The Bill, of course, was defeated, and that defeat again was marked by the withdrawal of erstwhile liberals from the cause of reform under the influence of events across the Channel. The fate of the bill again emphasized the growing disagreement between Fox and Burke, not by the sides they took on the question of reform but by the bases upon which they made their opposing stands.

The subject of the French Revolution did not again dominate debate in the British parliament during the spring of 1790. Burke and Fox worked together in the discussion of the Nootka Sound dispute with Spain and on meeting the criticism of their management of the impeachment of Warren Hastings.<sup>56</sup> However, Burke had not lost his antipathy for or his indignation with revolutionary France. Since Dr. Price's famous sermon in November, 1789, Burke<sup>57</sup> had been at work on a denunciation of that dissenter's views. The resulting book -- Burke's famed Reflections on the Revolution in France -- was published in the fall of 1790, and created an

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52. Parliamentary Debates, L11, 65.

53. Ibid., L11, 211, 212.

54. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 91.

55. Parliamentary Debates, L11, 212.

56. Ibid., L11, 566ff, 573ff, 587ff, 593, 686.

57. Morley, Burke, 148, 149.

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immediate sensation among more than just dyed-in-the-wool  
<sup>58</sup>conservatives. Although Burke himself declared that he had  
understated rather than overstated his case,<sup>59</sup> the Reflections  
was a violent and emotional defence of the old France and  
condemnation of the new. Windham declared the work to be  
<sup>60</sup>capable of turning public opinion. Walpole thought as highly  
<sup>61</sup>of its power. Morley declares that Burke gave "The timorous,  
the weak-minded, the bigoted....the key....to interpret the  
Revolution in harmony with their usual ideas and their temp-  
<sup>62</sup>erament." While some claim that the Reflections split English  
<sup>63</sup>opinion on the French Revolution, others think that Burke  
wrought no vital change, citing as proof that the Birmingham  
mob demonstrated against the Revolution before Burke's doctrines  
<sup>64</sup>could have been assimilated. The latter contention may be true  
as far as the lower classes are concerned - although Burke had  
voiced his disapprobation of the Revolution and the dissenters  
many months before the publication of his Reflections - but the  
work certainly must have had a strong and immediate effect upon  
the members of parliament and the upper classes. In less than a  
<sup>65</sup>year the book went into its eleventh edition. Horace Walpole  
<sup>66</sup>commented upon it within a month of publication. He also re-  
marked dryly that he was not surprised that Fox disliked Burke's

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58. Lecky, History of England, VI, 422.

59. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 94.

60. Ibid., I, 96, 97.

61. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XLV, 313-316, 345.

62. Morley, Burke, 153.

63. Ibid., 152.

64. Brown, French Revolution in England, 75, 77.

65. Morley, Burke, 151, 152.

66. Toynbee, op. cit., XLV, 331.



[illegible]

67 ideas. Fox apparently made no secret of his disapproval. 68

The parliamentary session opened quietly in late November, 1790. There was no official note of French affairs in the debates and Fox made only a comment on how little there was to dread from France. 69 Burke spoke seldom during the early part of the session, but in January, 1791, his "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly" stated his belief in the necessity of European intervention in France to restore the French king to his original powers. 70 This declaration was made several months before the attempted flight of the French king and queen, before the death of Mirabeau, and while the National Assembly, though the author of many foolish moves, still contained moderate men who 71 wished to maintain a constitutional monarchy. Fox claimed that the new pamphlet, particularly the part supporting a general war 72 against France, was generally dismissed as madness. However, Burke was now beyond taking a detached view of France. He had made up his mind with the writing of the Reflections. As far as he was concerned, there was no view of the Revolution but his own. Such was his anti-liberalism that, while Fox was ready to ignore a petition protesting his election at Westminster during the previous summer, Burke thought it libelous and meriting punishment. Burke considered the times to be so dangerous that "evil consequences" 73 might attend the disregarding of such a petition. However,

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67. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XLV, 331.

68. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 342.

69. See supra Chapter VII, 82.

70. Bohn's Standard Library, The Works of Edmund Burke (London, 1910), II, 529-531.

71. Lecky, History of England, VI, 477-479

72. Russell, Memorials, II, 298.

73. Parliamentary Debates, LIII, 334, 336, 337.

1877. The first of the year was a very dry one.

The second of the year was a very wet one.

The third of the year was a very dry one.

The fourth of the year was a very wet one.

The fifth of the year was a very dry one.

The sixth of the year was a very wet one.

The seventh of the year was a very dry one.

The eighth of the year was a very wet one.

The ninth of the year was a very dry one.

The tenth of the year was a very wet one.

The eleventh of the year was a very dry one.

The twelfth of the year was a very wet one.

The thirteenth of the year was a very dry one.

The fourteenth of the year was a very wet one.

The fifteenth of the year was a very dry one.

The sixteenth of the year was a very wet one.

The seventeenth of the year was a very dry one.

The eighteenth of the year was a very wet one.

The nineteenth of the year was a very dry one.

The twentieth of the year was a very wet one.

The twenty-first of the year was a very dry one.

The twenty-second of the year was a very wet one.

The twenty-third of the year was a very dry one.

The twenty-fourth of the year was a very wet one.

The twenty-fifth of the year was a very dry one.

The twenty-sixth of the year was a very wet one.

The twenty-seventh of the year was a very dry one.



Burke did agree to the bill for Roman Catholic relief which Fox<sup>74</sup> declared to be far too restrictive in scope, and they both supported a motion -- as did Pitt<sup>75</sup> -- for the abolition of the slave trade. Burke himself admitted that the measure was so moderate<sup>76</sup> that it could not be considered dangerous, and the motion on the slave trade was a purely humanitarian matter that could have no possible French connection, Burke could still give his support to liberal policies and to Fox. Therefore Burke could and did give his support on Fox's criticism of Pitt's foreign<sup>77</sup> policy over the Ozachow dispute with Russia.

The debates on the Slave Trade and the Ozachow affair were the last occasions on which the two friends acted together in parliament, but it was out of the Ozachow debate that their real quarrel came. In April, 1791, Fox spoke on one of the resolutions for peace which were being put forth during the debate on Pitt's foreign policy. On this particular occasion, Fox made his oft-quoted remark on the glories of the new French<sup>78</sup> constitution. At this, an agitated Burke attempted to speak but was prevented from doing so by a determined call for the vote which was started by members of the opposition and echoed<sup>79</sup> throughout the House. The call could have been an attempt by some Whigs to prevent Burke from speaking and probably quarrelling with Fox, or it could have been a quite legitimate attempt

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74. Parliamentary Debates, LIII, 408, 409, 467, 468.

75. Ibid., LIII, 332ff; LIV, 297ff.

76. Ibid., LIII, 468.

77. Ibid., LIV, 49ff.

78. The Modern Orator, II, 378.

79. Annual Register, 1791, 255.





to end the debate which had prolonged itself to three in the morning -- and Burke was not noted for the brevity of his speeches. Burke probably considered the former motive to be the real one. There seems to be little doubt that the incident strengthened his determination to speak his mind and thrash out the whole question of French affairs with Fox at the first opportunity.<sup>80</sup> Burke was probably further influenced by a remark made by Fox during the first discussion of the Quebec Bill regulating the government of Canada. In commenting on a plan for a hereditary nobility in Canada, of which he disapproved, Fox suggested that if the government insisted on that course they might revive some of the French titles that had recently fallen into disgrace.<sup>81</sup> The remark was a thoughtless bit of sarcasm on Fox's part which evidently gave rise to accusations that he held republican sentiments.<sup>82</sup> Burke was not in the House during Fox's speech but more than likely he heard of the comment and he may have given credence to the notion that Fox was proclaiming doctrines that were becoming increasingly dangerous to the British constitution. Burke was in no state of mind to ignore either eulogies of the French or criticism of the British constitutions. He was evidently determined to speak. The debate on the Quebec Bill was to be continued on April 21, 1791, and during a discussion on a postponement until May 6, Fox, obviously contrite, apologized for alluding too often during the session to the French Revolution. He explained that his comment on the French nobility during the

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80. Morley, Burke, 180.

81. The Modern Orator, II, 380.

82. Ibid., II, 389.

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previous debate had been only a "levity."<sup>83</sup> Burke was not to be conciliated. While the thought of antagonizing his friend depressed him, he declared, the consideration of the constitutions of other countries was necessary in a discussion of a government for Canada and, he added, the more he considered the French constitution, the more he disapproved. He stated flatly that he<sup>84</sup> would continue on this theme when the bill was next discussed. There could have been no more explicit warning of what was to come. On May 6th Burke must have gone to the House determined to give his views on French affairs, his warnings to England, and if necessary, to battle Fox. As soon as the chairman put the usual question, that the Quebec Bill be read paragraph by paragraph, Burke leapt to his feet. Did parliament have the right to appoint a government for a distant people, he asked? According to the "Rights of Man" upheld by certain persons in England, Canada had<sup>85</sup> a right to decide on her own government. From this Burke proceeded to a violent diatribe against the French constitution: he spoke of the deplorable conditions in France and of the echoes<sup>86</sup> of revolution to be heard in the English reform societies. He gave full scope to his hatred and fear of the French Revolution. Burke was called to order by numerous Whigs. Fox, irritated, sarcastically supported the motion that Burke was out of order in<sup>87</sup> introducing French affairs into the debate. He was sure that Burke was seeking a quarrel with him and he accused Burke of

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83. The Modern Orator, II, 384.

84. Ibid., II, 384, 385.

85. Ibid., II, 385.

86. Ibid., II, 386, 387.

87. Ibid., II, 388.



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trying to add weight to the claim that he (Fox) was a republican. Fox refused to retract his statements on French affairs for he still considered the Revolution to be one of the most glorious events in the history of mankind. The French constitution needed to be improved, Fox admitted, but at least that constitution had the good of the people as its object. As for the "Rights of Man", he continued, that doctrine was simply a recognition of the inherent rights of the people. This principle, as well as the fact that there must be provocation for the whole of a people to revolt, Fox declared, he had learned from Burke. It grieved him, he said, to find that Burke had<sup>88</sup> learned to draw a bill of indictment against a whole people. Fox himself realized, and admitted, that he had said more than<sup>89</sup> was wise. If Burke had had any hesitation about attacking Fox before, he was undecided no longer. In tones that were alternately petulant, grieved and violent, he bitterly assailed Fox and warned that English government was in eventual danger from the reform societies and the pulpits that were circulating infamous libels on the constitution. There might be no immediate danger, but the English discontent could be supported by the<sup>90</sup> French army. Burke spoke of his past relationship with Fox saying that they had formerly disagreed without damaging their friendship, but while it was "indiscreet at his time of life to provoke enemies...yet if his firm...adherence to the British

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88. The Modern Orator, II, 389-392

89. Ibid., II, 392.

90. Ibid., II, 392-394



constitution placed him in such a dilemma he would risk all; and...with his last breath, exclaim, 'Fly from the French constitution!'" Fox whispered, "there is no loss of friendship," but Burke was determined. "Yes, there was; he knew the price of his conduct; he had done his duty at the price of his friend; their friendship was at an end."<sup>91</sup> Charles Fox, whom even Burke later admitted was "born to be loved,"<sup>92</sup> would have been incapable of such an action, but he knew Burke and knew him to be in earnest. Fox attempted to speak, but tears trickled down his cheeks. Finally he gained control of his voice. He spoke of the obligation he owed to Burke, of the love and esteem in which he held him.<sup>93</sup> But the quarrel had left Fox bitter, too, and he could not keep that bitterness from his reply. He was convinced that Burke had intended injuring him in the eyes of all, for Burke knew Fox's beliefs on French affairs. Fox admitted that friendship should not stand in the way of public duty, but he thought that Burke should allow others to have their own opinions. Determined not to back down,<sup>94</sup> Fox defended his own beliefs on French affairs. Burke rose again to express his sorrow over his quarrel with Fox, but he could not leave the subject of their quarrel alone and concluded by expressing the hope that no member of parliament would barter the English constitution for "a wild and visionary system."<sup>95</sup> The quarrel and the end of the long friendship was the first and probably the most bitter of many such blows that were to fall upon

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91. The Modern Orator, II, 394.

92. Morley, Burke, 206.

93. The Modern Orator, II, 395.

94. Ibid., II, 396-399.

95. Ibid., II, 400.





Charles Fox within the next few years.

Was the break between Fox and Burke inevitable, or was their quarrel the result of their temperaments — the outspokenness of Fox and the irritability of Burke? The quarrel between Fox and Burke certainly did not arise through a change in Burke's beliefs as a result of the French Revolution. Burke's belief in political and personal liberty was constant throughout his life, but his liberalism was always of a limited kind, restricted by his devotion to the existing British constitution and his belief in the established church.<sup>96</sup> Until the outbreak of the French Revolution, there had been little conflict between his liberalism and his basic concept of society. However, after 1789 Burke considered that there was a clash of interests: that liberal acts as innovations might well endanger the constitution and the church establishment. This was the basis of his opposition to the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. Through their admiration for the French revolutionaries who had despoiled the French church, the dissenters had become, in the eyes of Burke, men of dangerous principles who might well upset the established church in England and by thus breaking traditional bonds, modify<sup>97</sup> the British constitution. In the light of such possibilities,

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96. While Burke had supported toleration for the Roman Catholics in 1778 (Morley, Burke, 77) and had upheld that view with personal courage in 1780 as Fox himself noted (The Modern Orator, II, 350), as well as supporting the dissenters on another occasion (Parliamentary Debates, LII, 181), unlike Fox he had opposed the relaxation of the subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles as a danger to the church establishment (Morley, Burke, 167).
97. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 180, 181.





the justice of the dissenters' cause carried no weight with Burke. His regard for the English constitution had always limited Burke's liberal tendencies in the matter of parliamentary reform.<sup>98</sup> Nor had he deviated in his support of the rebels during the American War, for this, too, was an effort to maintain the traditional system. The Americans were attempting to retain their established liberties which George III and the English government were trying to usurp. If the American liberties were lost, Burke believed that those of England would also disappear and the British constitution would thus be changed.<sup>99</sup> Even Burke's approval of the English Revolution of 1688 rested upon the fact that the upheaval, to him, was not a revolution<sup>100</sup> but the prevention of a revolution. Against such a background Burke's opposition to the French revolutionaries was to be expected. Burke opposed the Revolution because he saw the existing French constitution being torn up and the established order of society being completely overturned.<sup>101</sup> The new France was not to be built upon existing or traditional machinery, but upon a speculative liberty. Beside the ruin of the old established order, the possibility of a gain in liberty for the French people meant nothing to Burke.

The liberalism of Charles Fox was bound by no such restrictions as that of Burke. One of Fox's first liberal acts had been to support a petition for the relaxation of the subscription to the<sup>102</sup> Thirty-nine Articles of the established church. Fox considered

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98. Morley, Burke, 88, 89.

99. Ibid., 79ff.

100. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 90.

101. Ibid., LII, 91.

102. See Chapter III, p. 25, 26.





that an established national church, representing a majority of the people was acceptable, but its safety was only assured by moderation and toleration to all sects.<sup>103</sup> As Fox's attitude toward religious liberty was broader than that of Burke, so was his view of parliamentary reform. While Fox accepted his friend's plan for economic reform as well as his idea of virtual rather than democratic representation of the people, he also supported broader measures involving some changes of what Burke termed the "Machinery" of government.<sup>104</sup> Fox accepted the fact that some modification of the theory of a constitution might be necessary to achieve the best results.<sup>105</sup> For this reason his ideas were more flexible, more able to meet the drastic changes of the contemporary world, than those of Burke.

Thus there was a basic difference in the liberalism of Fox and Burke. Burke's liberal ideas operated only within the framework of the established order of society and the existing constitution. Any move that endangered this framework, even a move for a gain in liberty or justice, was not acceptable to him. He had no use for the "visionary schemes" or the abstract principles such as "natural rights" or the "rights of man" that were not set upon a foundation of past traditions and established institutions.<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, to Fox, personal, religious and political liberty for the individual was the end to be achieved. If these things were impossible within the established constitution, then the constitution, not the ideals, should be modified. Burke was the

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103. Parliamentary Debates, LI, 121, 124.

104. See Chapter IV.

105. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 95, 148; The Modern Orator, II, 396.

106. Ibid., LII, 84n, 180.





conservative with liberal tendencies; Fox was the true liberal.

The two concepts of liberty might never have clashed had not a crisis arisen in which their divergence became the main issue. The French Revolution presented such a crisis by overturning the established rules of order and government and, with the object of social and political liberty for the people, was setting up a completely new social and political system. For Burke, the aim of political liberty and justice for all in France meant nothing, for the framework of the old constitution, order, and law was gone. To Fox, the aims were everything. He abhorred the bloodshed and the persecution that accompanied the Revolution, but he believed that they should be looked upon with tolerance rather than condemnation in view of the previous despotism and in the hope of ultimate freedom and justice. <sup>107</sup> In the light of the views of Fox and Burke on political and personal liberty, their disagreement about the French Revolution was inevitable; considering their temperaments, their eventual quarrel was unavoidable. Both men had always fought for their beliefs with all their powers. Burke, from his speeches during the impeachment of Hastings and particularly during the Regency debate, had shown <sup>108</sup> evidence of a growing violence and irritability. His outrage at the French Revolution confirmed this tendency. Fox had lost none of his enthusiasm, his impetuosity or his outspokenness with the coming of the French Revolution: qualities he seldom had tempered with judgement. With the hope of a gain in liberty for his fellow men before his eyes, Fox was led by his enthusiasm into saying more than he intended or than was wise, on French

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107. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 96, 148.

108. Wraxall, Memoirs, 356.





affairs. He knew how Burke felt about events in France, but he may not have realized that the matter could bring a personal quarrel with Burke. With the exception of Pitt and George III, Fox hitherto had never made personal enemies through political disagreements. Such was his magnanimity that he probably never considered the possibility of a political matter becoming a personal grievance and that Burke might not only quarrel with him, but might break off their long friendship. Quite likely Fox did not realize the depth of Burke's conservatism. Even if he had, Fox would not have retracted his views on France. His love of liberty was as deep as Burke's fear of change.

The quarrel between Fox and Burke had far more than personal implications. When the break concerned two such prominent members of the same political party, and when the issue involved was one of such import as the French Revolution, the repercussions were certain to go beyond the personal level. Both men had spoken their minds on the French Revolution and there could be no further doubt as to the thoughts of each on the matter. Nor were there any remaining doubts as to the extent of their differences. At first, however, Fox appeared to have won the battle for support. Windham noted the date in his diary as the "Fatal day of rupture with Burke." Horace Walpole declared that while his views on

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109. This seems probable when we consider Fox's refusal to believe that there was any essential difference between his belief in liberty and that of Burke as applied to the French Revolution during the debate on the army estimates in 1790 (Parliamentary Debates, LII, 95, 96), and Fox's "shame and grief" at Burke's opposition to the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts during the same year (Parliamentary Debates, LII, 192).

110. Parliamentary Debates, LII, 153.

111. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 98.



French affairs were more akin to those of Burke, his sympathies<sup>112</sup> were all with Fox. This same sympathy for Fox was to be found<sup>113</sup> throughout parliament, although Pitt, of course, as an astute politician, did not miss the opportunity of supporting Burke and<sup>114</sup> the possibility of an open split in the opposition ranks. The Whig party, however, was wholeheartedly on the side of Fox. On May 12, 1791, the Whigs announced officially that Fox had "maintained the pure doctrines by which they [The Whigs] are bound<sup>115</sup> together, and upon which they have invariably acted." Burke was excommunicated from the party. Yet this was not the final decision. Within a year the public and the Whigs were beginning to abandon Fox who was left to face the worst years of the French War and the English reaction with a loyal, but almost negligible, band of followers.

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112. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XI, 430, 431; XV, 32, 33, 43.

113. Annual Register, 1791, 267.

114. Ibid., 1791, 269.

115. The Modern Orator, II, 400.





THE WHIG SPLIT

The disruption of the Whig party at the end of 1792 was not the result of a sudden over-night crisis, but of its members' gradual divergence of opinion about the French Revolution and English parliamentary reform. This divergence really began when Fox and Burke took opposing stands, as we have seen, on these subjects. Their difference of opinion was well-known among the Whigs, for while Burke, unlike Fox, did not announce his views to parliament until early in 1790, he had no hesitancy<sup>1</sup> in making them perfectly clear to some of his Whig friends. Burke's break with Sheridan in February, 1790, and Windham's conversion to Burke's views on reform added to the difficulties of the party. While Burke was not particularly influential in the party at this time,<sup>2</sup> and earned criticism from fellow Whigs<sup>3</sup> for his anti-liberal attitude in the spring of 1790, his disagreement with two such prominent party members as Fox and Sheridan could not have helped party unity. By the autumn of 1790 there appears to have been some Whig agreement, though a<sup>4</sup> silent one, with the principles Burke declared in his Reflections. Sir Gilbert Elliot claimed to have seen the beginnings of the party split in December, 1790, in the growing estrangement of Fox and Burke and the leaning of Fox toward Sheridan.<sup>5</sup> Fox certainly did not help matters by his constant eulogies of France.

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1. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 89ff; H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 106.
  2. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 97.
  3. H.M.C. Charlemont Papers, II, 121.
  4. Lecky, History of England, VI, 422.
  5. Ibid., VI, 423.



Even members of the government suggested that his adulation of the French constitution would simply strengthen English support of the existing government,<sup>6</sup> rather than aid the Whig reform cause.

Burke, after breaking with Fox in the spring of 1791, was completely isolated in parliament. While an object of admiration in the Tory papers and the victim of fewer and fewer caricatures,<sup>7</sup> he was hailed by the Whig newspapers as a deserter.<sup>8</sup> However, the Whig support of Fox that this implies was not on as firm a basis as appearances first indicated. Fox was a leader who inspired great personal loyalty and the scene in parliament at the time of his break with Burke had brought him much sympathy. He had staunchly and wisely declared his faith in the English system of government a few days after his quarrel with Burke,<sup>9</sup> and this speech probably conciliated uneasy Whigs and certainly evoked the admiration of Horace Walpole.<sup>10</sup> However, while there was a general feeling that Burke had been disloyal to the party in breaking with Fox, men such as Fitzwilliam, Windham and Sir Gilbert Elliot agreed in private with Burke's views on the French Revolution.<sup>11</sup> After two or three months of complete isolation, Burke renewed his personal relations with these men and even with the Duke of Portland.<sup>12</sup> He corresponded with the Earl of Charlemont, although the latter stated plainly

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6. H.M.C. Fortescue Papers, II, 58.

7. Wright, Caricature History, 454, 455.

8. Lecky, History of England, VI, 445.

9. Parliamentary Debates, LIV, 389, 390.

10. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XLV, 430.

11. Lecky, op. cit., VI, 471; Windham, Windham Papers, I, 96, 99, 100.

12. Ibid., I, 98, H.M.C. Charlemont Papers, II, 143.



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that he did not agree with Burke's views.<sup>13</sup> Burke had no intention of letting matters drift; his determination to convert the Whig party to his views of French affairs and of their threat to England was shown by his publication, in the summer of 1791, of his Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs. The work was greeted with<sup>14</sup> a "careful silence" on the part of some leading Whigs, and out-<sup>15</sup>spoken comment on the part of others. That some Whigs were uneasy over Burke's separation from the party was soon shown by Lord Stormont's attempt to heal the breach, which, he declared, was due to the imprudence of both Fox and Burke. Stormont claimed that there was really no material difference in the views of the two men. Burke was inclined to agree that this might be so basically, but he complained that Fox, instead of disclaiming the dangerous French doctrines circulating throughout the country,<sup>16</sup> was eulogizing the French Revolution.

Actually, Burke's suspicion of Fox's loyalty to England was growing. During the fall of 1791 Burke seriously claimed that Fox had sent a personal emissary to Russia for unknown and pre-<sup>17</sup>sumably sinister ends. The accusation was absolutely without<sup>18</sup> foundation but it was no doubt noted by members of the government who were suspicious of Fox for another reason. In an attempt to dissuade the French from violence against the royal family

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13. H.M.C. Charlemont Papers, II, 144.

14. Lecky, History of England, VI, 450.

15. Ibid., VI, 454.

16. Ibid., VI, 450, 451; H. Butterfield "Fox and the Whig Opposition", Cambridge Historical Journal, IX, no. 3, 1949, 296.

17. Russell, Memorials, II, 312ff.

18. A friend of Fox's travelling in Russia had been treated with great courtesy by the Russian court as Fox was still in high favor with the Empress, but Fox had had no part in investigating the journey (Russell, op. cit., II, 312ff.).





after their recapture in June, 1791, Fox had written to a leading French revolutionary.<sup>19</sup> Evidently Lord Grenville learned of the letter but probably not of its contents for the action was interpreted as an attempt by the Whig opposition to form their own connections with a European government.<sup>20</sup> In both cases, though the actions of Fox were quite innocent, the interpretation of the ministry was a hostile one.<sup>21</sup>

Part of the English public had given proof of their attachment to Charles Fox and his beliefs during the summer of 1791,<sup>22</sup> but even then the public view of the French Revolution was undergoing a gradual change. Dr. Priestley described the change as a decline in the "love of liberty" in England.<sup>23</sup> Certainly his joy over the arrested flight of the French royal family was not the common reaction in England.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, Burke pointed out that the government had difficulty in protecting English democrats from their more zealous and conservative fellow countrymen.<sup>25</sup> The growing disapproval of the public was pointed not only at France and the English reformers but also at the more liberal members of the Whig party, for the caricaturists were showing a tendency to link Fox and Sheridan with Price, Priestley and the French revolutionaries and to show them as possible regicides.<sup>26</sup>

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19. Lecky, History of England, VI, 511n.

20. H.M.C. Fortescue Papers, II, 144.

21. The report the government received from Russia supported the view that Fox's friend was in Russia as a representative of the English opposition, and Grenville certainly interpreted Fox's letter to a member of the French government in the same light (Ibid., II, 114, 144).

22. He was granted the freedom of the city of York (Lascelles, Fox, 230).

23. Lecky, op. cit., VI, 473

24. Ibid., VI, 473

25. Ibid., VI, 472; Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XV, 15; H.M.C. Fortescue Papers, II, 108.

26. Lecky, op. cit., VI, 474.

27. Wright, Caricature History, 456-458





The attitude of the public was no doubt echoed in the feelings of the more conservative Whigs. Windham, at least, by the fall of 1791, was approaching even more closely than before Burke's sentiments about the Revolution, when he voiced strong disapproval of the new French constitution.<sup>28</sup> The possibility of an outright split in the Whig party probably did not occur to Fox<sup>29</sup> but he must have been quite conscious of the dissensions arising from opinions so divergent as those of Windham and liberal Whigs. Certainly at the beginning of the parliamentary session in January, 1792, he did not miss the opportunity to declare again his loyalty to the British constitution and to point out that such was its difference from the constitution of pre-revolutionary France, that a delight in the fall of that old French constitution did not mean a desire for the destruction of the British.<sup>30</sup> Whig unity during the session, which was so obvious on the question of armament against Russia, was soon lost over the old matter of parliamentary reform. By the spring of 1792 English reform seemed to be unalterably connected with the French Revolution through the enthusiasm that most English reformers evinced for the new France. English conservatives were thus opposed to any change. This linking of France with English reform now emphasized the long-standing Whig dissension on parliamentary reform. Fox, as a supporter of France

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28. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 99, 100.

29. Fox definitely was taken by surprise in December, 1792, when Sir Gilbert Elliot announced in parliament that the Duke of Portland had agreed to a definite break. Fox apparently believed that while the two factions might vote separately on certain occasions, there was no question of the conservative Whigs giving consistent support to the government (Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 212, 213).

30. Ibid., LVI, 29.



and an upholder of moderate reform, was in a middle position between the radicals and the conservatives of the party. His position was complicated in April of 1792 when Grey, Sheridan and other liberal Whigs started the new reform society, the Friends of the People. The group was an aristocratic one which included a number of members of parliament who wanted equal representation and more frequent parliaments.<sup>31</sup> A prominent radical of the Constitutional Society was also a member,<sup>32</sup> but even without him the new group was bound to alarm a country already shocked by the results of French demands for reform. Fox himself disapproved of the society and of Whig membership in it, for such a membership was bound to accentuate the difference of opinion within the Whig party.<sup>33</sup> When Grey, as a representative of the Friends of the People, gave notice on April 30, 1792, of a motion he would make during the next session for parliamentary reform, Fox had to choose sides within the party. He chose to defend his friends, Grey and Sheridan, and the cause of liberalism. The decision was a momentous one for Fox personally, for the Whigs, and for England.

The debate which followed Grey's notice of motion provided the public with a clear picture of the two diverging attitudes within the Whig party. Both Fox and Grey declared that something must be done to quiet the reform agitation; their solution was a

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31. Parliamentary Debates, LVII, 451.

32. Brown, French Revolution in England, 17; Russell, Life and Times, II, 281.

33. Ibid., II, 281; Russell, Memorials, III, 22.





reform of parliament. Fox's speech was not a radical one but  
 a firm defence of both his friends and his principles. Pitt  
 voiced his disapproval of Grey's announcement by declaring that  
 the time was inopportune for reform and, furthermore, that many  
 reformers were aiming at subversion of the constitution. Burke,  
 of course, was violently opposed to the idea and Windham again  
 followed him. In a letter written at this time, Windham ex-  
 pressed the conservative Whig viewpoint when he declared that  
 his opposition to parliamentary reform stemmed from the fear that  
 innovations would bring to England a storm similar to the one  
 which had arisen in France. He did agree with Grey that normally  
 the best way to avert a danger was the use of "timely concession,"  
 but on this occasion felt reform concessions would produce the  
 opposite effect; once some changes were allowed the floodgates  
 would be opened. Windham received some Whig support, which in-  
 cluded Fox's former protégé, Tom Grenville. There were other  
 Whigs ready to follow Fox and Grey, but as Fox noted, the gen-  
 eral feeling of parliament coincided with the opinion of Pitt.

The decision of Charles Fox to defend Grey and The Friends  
 of the People on the question of reform widened the breach in the  
 Whig ranks. The split was further accentuated within a few weeks

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34. Parliamentary Debates, LVII, 450, 467. Despite his public support, Fox was evidently uncertain over the wisdom of reform agitation at that time (Butterfield, Cambridge Historical Journal, 297, 308).

35. Ibid., LVII, 466ff.

36. Ibid., LVII, 462-465.

37. Ibid., LVII, 472ff, 478ff.

38. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 100-103.

39. Parliamentary Debates, LVII, 484, 486.

40. Ibid., LVII, 480, 485, 486, 492, 495.

41. Ibid., LVII, 466.



when a number of the prominent conservative Whigs who had not openly taken sides on reform itself did so on a question that was closely related to the reform movement - the royal proclamation against seditious writings. The Duke of Portland, who was official head of the Whig party and known to hold conservative views, was consulted by the ministry upon the proposed terms of the proclamation.<sup>42</sup> The division within the party was shown at a meeting called by the Duke of Portland to discuss the proposed measure. The Duke of Bedford on arriving asked if Mr. Fox was expected and when told that he was not, replied, "Then I am sure I have no business here."<sup>43</sup> After the violent parliamentary debate on the proclamation, the Whig party split on the vote - and the votes were generally in line with the individual attitudes toward the French Revolution. The Duke of Portland voted for the ministry for the first time, because of the "speculative doctrines" circulating through the country.<sup>44</sup> With him voted that erstwhile radical reformer, the Duke of Richmond,<sup>45</sup> and the two were well supported by other Whigs. The Prince of Wales, in favoring the proclamation, spoke for the first time in the House of Lords.<sup>46</sup> The only two prominent Whigs opposing the proclamation in the Lords were Lord Lauderdale and the Marquis of Lansdowne.<sup>47</sup> In the Commons, Windham, who voted for the proclamation, was joined by Lord North, Powys,

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42. Russell, Memorials, III, 18.

43. Ibid., III, 18.

44. Parliamentary Debates, LVIII, 475.

45. Ibid., LVIII, 473, 475, 489.

46. Ibid., LVIII, 464.

47. Ibid., LVIII, 465, 478.





the Marquis of Titchfield, Tom Grenville and many others. In opposition to the ministry and to some of their own colleagues stood Fox, Grey, Sheridan, Whitbread, Francis and Lord John Russell.<sup>49</sup>

The parliamentary opposition to the proclamation against seditious writings consisted generally of the men who were to form the Whig opposition under Fox for several years to come. These men were all convinced that, as Fox said, the government had other purposes than those it professed. The obvious target of the proclamation was the works of Thomas Paine. As the first part of the Rights of Man had been on sale for a full year, the opposition first accused the government of planning the measure in order to institute a system of spies to report the actions of the reform-minded public to the ministry.<sup>50</sup> The opposition, however, was really convinced that the measure was aimed primarily, not at seditious publications, but at the Friends of the People and at creating division in the Whig ranks.<sup>51</sup> Pitt certainly tried to add fuel to the Whig differences when he accused Fox outright of favoring Paine's republican doctrines - an accusation that Fox termed absurd.<sup>52</sup>

During the debate on the king's proclamation, Windham declared that the division of the Whigs on the vote would be for that occasion only.<sup>53</sup> Windham's statement is difficult to under-

48. Parliamentary Debates, LVIII, 155, 157, 171, 174, 181.

49. Ibid., LVIII, 137, 162, 168, 180, 186.

50. Annual Register, 1792, 166; Parliamentary Debates, LVIII, 141, 166, 169.

51. Ibid., LVIII, 186-189, 138, 147.

52. Ibid., LVIII, 191.

53. Ibid., LVIII, 171.



stand in view of the deep differences between the Whig factions, but he may have been relying on the success of the negotiations for a coalition with the Pitt government which began almost immediately after the passing of the proclamation, or he may have counted upon the negotiations, even if they failed, to draw the Whigs together again. Certainly there was close agreement among the Whigs at the beginning. Portland considered a coalition a necessity.<sup>54</sup> Fox was agreeable at first, providing that there was an agreement on the questions of parliamentary reform, the abolition of the slave trade, the repeal of the Test Act and an agreed approach to French politics.<sup>55</sup> A coalition seemed possible because Pitt and Fox, basically, were agreed on some liberal principles and, in addition, they both were opposed to war, and Fox, even though he believed the French Revolution ultimately would bring liberty to France, was not happy about the violence attending that Revolution.<sup>56</sup> Actually, Fox and Pitt were far closer in principle than Portland, Loughborough or Malmesbury was with either of them.<sup>57</sup>

The negotiations, however, did not move smoothly. Malmesbury claimed that while Fox was not opposed to coalitions as such, he soon began to doubt Pitt's sincerity, feeling that the head of the ministry was using the negotiations to further divide the Whigs.<sup>58</sup> Pitt, in turn, disliked Fox's attitude on French affairs

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54. Russell, Memorials, III, 13.

55. Ibid., III, 13, 14. The Duke of York claimed that Fox said he approved a coalition because he did not want to be in opposition if a war broke out (Butterfield, Cambridge Historical Journal, 315).

56. Russell, Life and Times, II, 288, 289; Russell, Memorials, III, 14.

57. Ibid., III, 14.

58. Ibid., III, 14; Russell, Life and Times, II, 287.





and hesitated over Fox's probable desire for the foreign office. At one point Pitt, apparently, was willing to meet the Whigs half-way, but George III was not of the same mind. The king declared that the Whigs might have "Anything complimentary to them,<sup>60</sup> but no power." Another obstacle was Lord Grenville who would not have taken kindly to the loss of his post as Foreign Secretary<sup>61</sup> or to Whig membership in the cabinet itself. Probably Pitt was not serious about the negotiations after the declaration of the king on the matter,<sup>62</sup> and many friends of both Fox and Pitt were not really in favor of a coalition.<sup>63</sup> Burke finally put a stop to the Whig side of the negotiations. At a meeting at Malmesbury's house, he declared that he personally favored a coalition, but not one that included Fox. The Duke of Portland, said Burke, was being used by Fox, or by those who had corrupted Fox's principles; the party was definitely divided and that fact should be made public by the appointment of Lord Loughborough as Lord Chancellor.<sup>64</sup> Fox himself believed that the Whigs would continue to disagree among themselves even within the cabinet, and as he considered it too late to achieve any concrete good in foreign affairs,<sup>65</sup> he did not much regret the failure of the negotiations. Fox told the Duke of Portland that he was convinced that the Whigs<sup>66</sup> could never honourably serve under Pitt. He admitted that a strong

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59. Russell, Memorials, III, 16.

60. Duke of Leeds, Memoirs, 188, cited in J. Holland Rose, William Pitt and The Great War (London, 1912), 37.

61. Ibid., 37.

62. Ibid., 38.

63. Russell, Memorials, III, 17.

64. Ibid., III, 17; Russell, Life and Times, II, 287-88.

65. Russell, Memorials, II, 301.

66. Ibid., IV, 287.



administration was necessary, but he felt that, as the weakness of the ministry resulted from the way in which it had been formed, the only just manner of forming a coalition was to give no priority to those at present holding cabinet positions. He doubted whether this method would even be considered.<sup>67</sup> Lord Loughborough commented that Fox would not agree to a coalition unless he could designate what offices he pleased. Loughborough personally thought it would be impossible to have Fox and Pitt on an equal standing in the Commons.<sup>68</sup> Despite the failure of the negotiations, Portland, prompted by the Duke of Leeds, was still leaning toward a union of parties in July, 1792, but he was evidently<sup>69</sup> reluctant to make any outright declaration of his sentiments. Others, although they agreed with Portland, were still suspicious of Pitt's sincerity.<sup>70</sup> Fox had become so suspicious that he even considered Pitt might be using the presentation of the Garter, which Portland accepted in July, as a means of dividing the Whigs through jealousy.<sup>71</sup>

The dissension within the Whig party never really died after the disputes over reform and the proclamation against seditious writings in the spring of 1792. In August Lord Loughborough, who had been dubious of party policy on at least one previous occasion,<sup>72</sup> criticized Fox's attitude toward the coalition negotiations. In his opinion, every time Fox had quitted

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67. H.M.C. Carlisle Papers, 696.

68. Ibid., 696, 697.

69. Russell, Memorials, IV, 288-290.

70. H.M.C. Carlisle Papers, 699, 700.

71. Russell, op. cit., IV, 286.

72. During the Regency dispute in 1788 (H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 662).





the ground on which the party stood, Pitt had gained the advantage, and on more than one occasion Fox had followed Pitt to a position in which he (Fox) opposed his own friends. Fox had only himself to blame for the dissension of the Whigs, Loughborough claimed, for while Fox had not favored the Friends of the People, the society had been encouraged by his continued support of France and the cause of reform since his break with Burke.<sup>73</sup> In October, 1792, Lord Fitzwilliam spoke of the awkward position of the party: while Fox was a necessary part of the machine, he lacked some of the qualities for party leadership which Portland had to offer. Fitzwilliam admired Burke's foresight about events in France but he criticized the attack on Fox as tending to pin Fox to the sentiments he had declared at the outbreak of the French Revolution. He thought that Fox's sentiments must be ascertained before any step was taken which might push him further toward the dissenting Whigs, for, in Fitzwilliam's view, a coalition without Fox would not be a particularly strong one. Fitzwilliam doubted the sincerity of the liberal Whigs belonging to the Friends of the People, for he believed that they had adopted reform as a method of ousting Portland from the Whig leadership, not realizing that Portland would resist and would have support in doing so.<sup>74</sup>

Quite probably Burke exerted an influence detrimental to Whig unity, too. He was certainly in personal contact with the more conservative Whigs.<sup>75</sup> Burke had not only become a great

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73. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 697.

74. Ibid., 698-700.

75. Annual Register, 1792, 39

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favorite at court, but had joined the government in the fall of 1792, and at least one Whig who still professed a belief in the French Revolution heartily wished that Burke had given up politics as he had spoken of doing in 1791.

Nor did events on the Continent aid the precarious unity of the Whig party. In July, 1792, the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto demanding that all in France submit to their king or be considered and treated as rebels, fired the French with a new zeal for their war against Austria and Prussia. In the French assembly there were calls for the deposition of the king. On August the 10th, after anarchy and bloodshed, the king was deposed and, on September 21st, the monarchy was formally abolished. Shocking though this was, the English were even more horrified by the September massacres, in which more than a thousand French political and ordinary prisoners were murdered in the prisons of Paris. By the autumn of 1792, French armies were successfully driving back their European enemies. In November, the French declared navigation on the Scheldt open and offered assistance to any people wishing to regain their freedom — actions certain to cause agitation in England.

The internal events in France during the summer and fall made no basic change in Fox's attitude toward the revolution.

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76. Annual Register, 1792, 173.

77. C. Grant Robertson, England Under the Hanoverians (London, 1911), 363.

78. H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 198.

79. Bertha Meriton Gardiner, The French Revolution, 1789-1795 (London, 1908), 114-117, 124.

80. Ibid., 122.

81. Ibid., 134.





Fox obviously looked at French politics with English eyes, for he favored the party he considered closest to Whig principles, and, before the French king's deposition, had firmly believed that the king's ministers should represent the feeling of the assembly.<sup>82</sup> His view of the events preceding August 10th and the actual deposition of the French king, which he deplored, did not rival his horror at the Duke of Brunswick's proclamation.<sup>83</sup> In fact, he eventually declared himself reconciled to the abolition of the French monarchy, if the claim that the king and his ministers had favored the foreign invasion was true. This position did not lessen his disgust at the means used to depose Louis, or at the conduct of the assembly in the face of invasion, and he was concerned over the fate of the French queen, for he feared that the trials and executions in France were not at an end.<sup>84</sup> Fox was resolutely hopeful of the success of the French for he considered what was happening in France as "a great crisis for the real cause of liberty."<sup>85</sup> But no matter how much he hoped for the ultimate success of liberty, Fox had nothing but horror and disgust for the massacres of September. He declared them to be heart-breaking for those who felt as he did about the Revolution.<sup>86</sup> He would not maintain his defence even of the Jacobins, if they had had a hand in the massacres.<sup>87</sup> However, by November, 1792, Fox had regained his optimism, for

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82. Russell, Memorials, II, 302.

83. Ibid., II, 301.

84. Ibid., II, 302, 303.

85. Ibid., II, 303.

86. Ibid., II, 304.

87. Ibid., II, 306.

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he felt that the new ruling party in France showed more sense and principle than any previous one, but he still expressed 88 fear regarding their intentions toward the French royal family. As he had rejoiced in the American victories during the American War, so Fox now rejoiced in the French victories against the "invaders"; as he was hopeful about internal French affairs, so 89 he defended the French conquests to date. However, again he had his suspicions: he was dubious of French intentions in the Netherlands and of the French offer of aid to countries wishing "free- 90 dom."

While commenting in November on his own pleasure and that of others at the French victories, Fox expressed uneasiness over the extravagant rejoicing of English reformers that had already 91 inspired fear in some of his fellow Whigs. Fox's anxiety was well founded, for in October the Duke of Portland had written to Windham of his gloom at the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick from France, and of his fear of French principles. The hostility of 92 Portland to the French Revolution was obvious. Windham himself declared that at the end of November there was an increasing dismay among Whigs over the progress of French arms and the general opinion of the conservative Whigs was that they should tell the ministry they would support the government on measures aimed at 93 maintaining the present English constitution.

During the summer of 1792 Fox had not considered that there

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88. Russell, Memorials, II, 308.

89. Ibid., II 304, 308, 310.

90. Ibid., II, 310.

91. Ibid., II, 308.

92. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 106, 107.

93. Ibid., I, 114, 115.





was any real separation within the party, but by November he was doubtful ~~whether~~ the Whigs could be held together. He denied that Sheridan, Grey and their friends had been perverted by the "rascals of the democratic party," but he did believe that Portland, Fitzwilliam and Spencer had been influenced by a feeling for their own class.<sup>95</sup> Fox declared that his own views on parliamentary reform had not changed and that the change in party policy (which was evidently being blamed for the disagreement among the Whigs) stemmed from the conservative Whigs. The desire of some of these Whigs to support the government on measures they considered necessary for the safety of the country was considered by Fox to be the real reason for the growing split in the party. Fox not only denied that England was in danger from France or French principles, but he also opposed any Whig support of Pitt on the basis that such support would give the ministry so much power that Pitt would be in a well-nigh invincible position; there would be no means of halting any move he wished to make.<sup>96</sup>

While Fox denied that England was in danger from either external or internal forces, by the first of December, 1792, the public, like Portland and other Whigs, was thoroughly alarmed by the victorious French armies and the unrest in England.<sup>97</sup> Even the government appeared to be uneasy, for early in December, 1792, the militia was called out and the parliamentary session was announced for the 13th of December.

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94. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 696.

95. Russell, Memorials, III, 257, 258.

96. Ibid., III, 259-262.

97. See Chapter X, p. 159-160.

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Fox had noted the alarm of the government late in November and had stated bluntly that he would think the ministry mad if they allowed themselves to be drawn into war. However, he had no great faith in Pitt's ability to keep England out of war.<sup>98</sup> At a Whig dinner early in December, Fox called the anxiety over sedition at home and over the possibility of invasion by the French, groundless. Malmesbury reported that no one agreed with him. Evidently only Fox thought the opening of the Scheldt<sup>99</sup> insufficient grounds for war. On the first of December Fox had written indignantly to Portland that if the administration declared the country to be in a state of danger from insurrection or rebellion, he should "grow savage" and not think a French lanterne too bad for the ministry. He was certain that the chief purpose of the government leaders in doing so would be the<sup>100</sup> destruction of the Whig party, which might result from such an action. After the Orders in Council of December 1st and 5th calling out the militia, Fox wrote that "None of our friends have sanctioned this most detestable measure, and I hope none<sup>101</sup> will,"<sup>102</sup> He added that he did not believe there would be war.

Fox was unduly optimistic on both counts. Members of the party wishing to deal with the government were looking to Windham to arrange matters,<sup>103</sup> and he was not disappointing them. Windham and Burke, with the consent of Portland had evidently

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98. Russell, Memorials, II, 310.

99. Ibid., III, 19.

100. Ibid., IV, 291.

101. Ibid., II, 311.

102. Ibid., II, 311.

103. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 109.





talked to Pitt on the subject of Whig support of the government without making any demands for power or place, although Pitt was planning to give Loughborough a post when Portland agreed to the plan.<sup>104</sup> By December 3rd there were reports that the agreement between the Portland Whigs and the government had been concluded,<sup>105</sup> although this may have been only rumour arising from the meetings with Pitt. However, Windham did claim that a promise of Whig support encouraged the government to take the emergency steps it did.<sup>106</sup> Oddly enough he stated that at this time Fox's sentiments were unknown, although he personally suspected that the differences between Fox and the conservative Whigs were too great for reunion.<sup>107</sup> About the time parliament opened, however, Sir Gilbert Elliot, Malmesbury and others were still urging the Duke of Portland to separate from Fox. Portland would say nothing except that he was against any move which would widen the breach within the party.<sup>108</sup> Matters were almost beyond his control, for some of the conservative Whigs had determined upon their course, and Fox had decided upon his.

The throne speech on December 13th asked parliament's approval of the emergency steps already taken by the government and, after noting gravely the sedition and riots that were rife throughout the country and the danger of war, stated that the administration would soon seek approval for augmentation of the army and navy and for further measures to repress the

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104. H.M.C. Fortescue Papers, II, 335, 336.

105. H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 203.

106. Windham, Wincham Papers, I, 115.

107. Ibid., I, 115, 116.

108. Russell, Memorials, III, 19.



domestic disturbances. Fox, in one of his most powerful speeches, tried to persuade parliament against a too hasty decision on such legislation. There was not one fact in the throne speech, he declared, which was not false and unfounded. "An insurrection!" he cried, "Where is it?...Good God! an insurrection in Great Britain !...But where is it?"<sup>110</sup> While this insurrection had supposedly existed for fourteen days, Fox pointed out that there was no information as to where the disturbance was to be found. Riots were not necessarily motivated by a desire to overturn the constitution, he declared, nor was disaffection to the constitution proved by the discouragement of men over the defeat of the armies of liberty.<sup>111</sup> The ministers, he claimed, were attempting an "intellectual oppression" by suppressing men's views; the crisis lay in the false assumption that the British constitution was perfect and untouchable; the danger was of extremes of either republicanism or despotism.<sup>112</sup> He appealed to the Whigs who had been "deluded" into voting for the proclamation of the previous May not to fall again. Fox declared that in his opinion the way to quiet agitation was not by proclamations or repressive legislation but toleration. He personally would repeal the Test and Corporation Acts to quiet the discontent of the dissenters; he would repeal the penal statutes and would show republicans that while parlia-

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109. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 5-7.

110. Charles James Fox: Speeches During the French Revolutionary War Period (London, n.d.), 2.

111. Ibid., 3, 4.

112. Ibid., 7-9.



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ment was not chosen by all, it represented all; above, all, he said, he should "cheerfully, patiently listen."<sup>113</sup> Fox concluded his appeal by stating his approval of the British constitution and by pointing out that the proposed repressive legislation<sup>114</sup> was only increasing the power of the crown. The members listened intently to Fox. Grey and Thomas Grenville (the latter had voted for the king's proclamation in May) supported Fox's stand on the basis that the government's attitude was not justified.<sup>115</sup> However, the feeling of the house was against the liberal Whigs. Burke spoke with his usual ardour in opposition to Fox and, more important, Windham declared himself convinced of the country's danger and supported Burke's stand.<sup>116</sup> The following day Mr. York made the first outright attack on the patriotism of the opposition.<sup>117</sup> The throne speech was approved by a majority of 290 to 50 and Fox's amendment to the address, advocating negotiations with France, was thrown out without a division.<sup>118</sup>

Fox was not easily subdued and two days after parliament opened he moved to send a minister to Paris to treat with the provisional government of France. This, evidently, was the most generally reviled of all Fox's motions during the first few weeks of the session.<sup>119</sup> While he specifically stated during his speech that the motion did not mean he approved of the present French government or its actions, he believed Britain

113. Fox: Speeches During the French Revolutionary War Period 16, 17.

114. Ibid., 19.

115. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 11ff, 14ff.

116. Ibid., LIX, 65ff, 45ff.

117. Ibid., LIX, 88.

118. Ibid., LIX, 73, 88.

119. The comment in the Annual Register is most disapproving. (Annual Register, 1793, 33, 34). This is the motion Fox defends most vehemently in his Letter to the Westminster Constituents in Jan., 1793 (Fox: French Revolution speeches, 52).



should have the machinery with which to negotiate with every government. With a minister in Paris there might be a possibility of avoiding war.<sup>120</sup> Fox was supported by the names that were to become familiar in opposition during the next few years --<sup>121</sup> Grey, Erskine, Sheridan, Whitbread and Francis. This time the opposition to the liberal Whigs was violent. Lord Sheffield made a personal attack upon Fox. Windham was almost violent, and Burke, of course, made his usual denunciation of things French or tainted with French principles.<sup>122</sup> Again there was no division on the motion.

Fox's opposition to the throne speech and his motion for a minister to France had done nothing to soothe the troubled Whig party. Lord Malmesbury noted that Fox spoke without rancour of the Whig differences and with disgust of the French declaration of December 15th proclaiming the national sovereignty of the people in French-occupied countries and the suppression of all authorities there.<sup>123</sup> Fox also denounced the proceedings against the French royal family and suggested that an address from the British parliament might have some effect.<sup>124</sup> He supported measures for the augmentation of the British army and navy.<sup>125</sup> On other occasions such actions might have had a conciliatory effect but now feelings ran too high. Burke made a violent attack upon Fox in parliament when, despite Windham's

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120. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 30, 33.

121. Ibid., 31.

122. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 99, 120ff, 130ff.

123. Russell, Memorials, III, 20.

124. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 35.

125. Ibid., 36.





efforts to stop him, he declared that Fox had been seduced by his own abilities into the belief that the English government was not the proper one in which to display them.<sup>126</sup> Lord Fitzwilliam was so distressed over the whole situation that he<sup>127</sup> left London, and on December 24, 1792, the Duke of Portland finally agreed on the political separation of the conservative Whigs from Fox.<sup>128</sup> While the Whigs had voted individually on bills since the beginning of the session about two weeks previous, there had been as yet no public declaration of a break between the Foxites and the Portland group.

By the time the Duke of Portland had agreed to break with Fox, the great divergence in Whig opinion had become very clear through the debate on the Alien Bill which was first introduced in the House of Lords. The measure was designed to place restrictions on the actions of foreigners in England and the Lords passed it eventually without a division. The Dukes of Portland, Richmond and Leeds and Lord Loughborough were the Whig mainstays who supported the government, but their former colleagues, the Marquis of Lansdowne, the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Guilford<sup>129</sup> and the Earl of Lauderdale opposed the bill. In the Commons, where the measure was introduced December 28th, the debate was even more impassioned and certainly as momentous. Burke, in a speech that was almost embarrassingly dramatic, pulled a dagger from his coat and threw it on the floor of the House, crying

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126. Russell, Memorials, III, 20.

127. Ibid., III, 20.

128. Ibid., III, 20.

129. Annual Register, 1793, 36.



that here were the fruits to be gathered from a French connection.<sup>130</sup>

While Sir Gilbert Elliot used more restraint than Burke, his speech was the most momentous of the debate. He spoke reluctantly, he said, because of differences of opinion with some of his friends. Since the close of the previous session he had much regretted the statements Charles Fox had made on reform and the king's proclamation, and he now felt their differences of opinion to be so great that they must henceforth act separately.

Elliot declared that he did not stand alone; he indicated that Portland, as head of the party, agreed with him and had allowed<sup>131</sup>

him to make this statement.<sup>131</sup> Charles Fox was horrified. This was the first time he had heard of "a general difference of opinion from him, and a disposition to support the present Administration," he declared.<sup>132</sup>

He had been assured that there was no disinclination to follow the plan they had previously adopted.<sup>133</sup>

Fox probably was referring to the method the Whigs had used on the throne speech and in the latter part of the previous session by which they voted individually on some questions while retaining a unified opposition to the government on others. If that plan had been changed Fox was not the only one labouring under a misapprehension.<sup>134</sup> The most likely explanation of Fox's ignorance of what was happening within the party is that Portland's

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130. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 224.

131. Ibid., LIX, 224.

132. Ibid., LIX, 210, 211.

133. Ibid., LIX,

134. Fox's assertion that no change of plan had been discussed is supported by a letter from Tom Grenville to Windham in February, 1793 (Windham, Windham Papers, I, 111).





refusal to commit himself at the beginning of the session on the wishes of the conservative Whigs to support the government precluded any announcement of a definite change of plan to the remainder of the party. Thus matters were allowed to drift. It seems strange that Fox was taken so completely by surprise, but Portland's obvious indecision and Fox's known persuasive talents may have convinced the conservative Whigs of the need to be circumspect. If Fox did hear rumours of the attempt of some Whigs to make a definite break in the party he may have underestimated the danger in the belief that the Duke of Portland would never consent. Certainly when Elliot announced the break Fox was shocked that Portland had agreed to it.<sup>136</sup> There seems to be good reason, too, for Fox's surprise. While Portland agreed with the conservative Whigs and probably had given his assent to the break in the party, he obviously could not go through with his decision and a few days later Elliot had to retract his statement in parliament.<sup>137</sup>

Actually, Elliot did not have the complete support of the conservative Whigs in his desire to join the government. During a further debate on the Alien Bill, Lord Titchfield told the Commons that while he supported the measure he was still opposed to the government.<sup>138</sup> This statement and Elliot's first speech made it necessary, in Fox's opinion, for the Duke of Portland to

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135. Russell, Memorials, III, 19.

136. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 212, 213.

137. Ibid., LIX, 230.

138. Ibid., LIX, 231.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the system has solutions for all values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  if the function  $f(x)$  is continuous and has a bounded derivative. The second part of the paper is devoted to a detailed study of the properties of the solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are unique and depend continuously on the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . The third part of the paper is devoted to a study of the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system (1) for large values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) approach zero as the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  approach infinity.

$\alpha$	$\beta$	$x$	$y$
1	1	0.5	0.5
2	2	0.33	0.33
3	3	0.25	0.25
4	4	0.2	0.2
5	5	0.16	0.16
6	6	0.14	0.14
7	7	0.13	0.13
8	8	0.12	0.12
9	9	0.11	0.11
10	10	0.11	0.11

declare himself on one side or the other,<sup>139</sup> though Fox himself still considered there were only a few points of difference between his own opinions and those of Portland.<sup>140</sup> Matters remained in an unsettled and confused state for some time. While no public statement was made, the Portland Whigs voted with the administration and Lord Loughborough joined the government as Lord Chancellor in January, 1793.<sup>141</sup> In February Windham was active in trying to form a coalition with Pitt.<sup>142</sup> In March, 1793, Windham reported that Portland still believed the differences with Fox were only disagreement on a particular point; these differences might be reconciled if the party connection was retained. This attitude naturally annoyed Windham, who believed that unless Portland was the declared head of the conservative Whigs the party would simply dwindle and die.<sup>143</sup> Yet while Windham condemned Portland's attitude he expressed the hope that Fox might be reunited with the conservative section of the party.<sup>144</sup> Thus the Whigs continued - with one section in opposition to the government and the other supporting the administration - until Portland and his followers finally joined Pitt in a coalition in 1794.<sup>145</sup>

While Fox's former colleagues parted from him with great reluctance, many of them blamed him for the disruption of the party. Windham, in recording the events of late 1792, declared that had Fox disclaimed the 'Friends of the People and sided

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139. Russell, Memorials, IV, 293, 294.

140. Ibid., IV, 295.

141. Annual Register, 1793, 44.

142. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 110, 111.

143. Ibid., I, 116, 117.

144. Ibid., I, 118.

145. Robertson, History, 372.





with those "who had...the best claim to be considered his  
 friends," he would now be a minister. <sup>146</sup> Lord Carlisle, Fox's  
 old friend, was even more critical. The Whig split would not  
 have occurred, he stated, if Fox had stopped the moves of the  
 Friends of the People in parliament. Without approving the  
 radicals, Fox had done nothing to disqualify himself from  
 union with them. If he had been moderate, the others would  
 have fallen in line. Carlisle implied that Fox's only reason  
 for refusing to support the government was that by such an  
 action Fox would not gain power, but Pitt would gain strength  
 and would be in an even stronger position than he had been  
<sup>147</sup> previously.

Lord John Russell adds weight to this imputation with his  
 claim that a direct offer of the foreign office and the leader-  
 ship of the House of Lords by Pitt would have been accepted by  
 Fox. <sup>148</sup> There is always a possibility, of course, that Russell's  
 claim was true. Fox was fond of power and he was certainly not  
 convinced of the necessity of a split in the Whig party. As  
 Carlisle suggests, Fox had objected to Whig support of the  
 government on the basis that such support would enhance Pitt's  
 position. <sup>149</sup> Fox was also aware of the possible danger from  
 France, although he did not consider a French invasion to be  
 imminent at the end of 1792. <sup>150</sup> The one great fallacy in the  
 suggestion is the implication that the king would have con-

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146. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 117, 118.  
 147. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 702, 703.  
 148. Russell, Memorials, III, 21.  
 149. See supra, p. 133.  
 150. Russell, op. cit., III, 19.



sented not only to include Fox in the government but to grant him a title. Aside from the long-standing enmity between the king and Fox, the king had refused, only six months previously, to allow the Whigs to assume any power in the event of a coalition.<sup>151</sup> Even supposing that the king suddenly lapsed into a state of benevolence and allowed Pitt to make an offer to Fox, the probability of Fox's acceptance appears to be a slim one. In the first place, while Fox did object to strengthening Pitt's position by supporting him, as Carlisle noted, the objection was not wholly on a personal basis for Fox was opposed to the minister attaining a position in which his actions could not be restrained by some sort of opposition.<sup>152</sup> Fox had long disapproved of "blind confidence" in the ministers on the part of parliament.<sup>153</sup> There was, of course, a personal side to the question. Fox had a deep dislike of Pitt and the suspicion with which he regarded him had been shown only six months before in the negotiations for a coalition and again even more recently.<sup>154</sup> Nor were these the only reasons against Fox's acceptance of an offer from Pitt. Fox had declared at the time of the negotiations for the coalition that he considered it too late for him to accomplish much as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. While he might have been willing to take the chance had the post been offered to him, he was not likely to change his opinion of July on the ability of the Whigs to

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151. See supra, p. 127.

152. See supra, p. 133.

153. See chapter IV, p. 50.

154. See supra, p. 126, 127, 134.





work together in the cabinet.<sup>155</sup> Lastly, Fox needed convincing that England lay in great danger -- and he was not easily frightened -- before he would have deserted his belief in the French cause and in the cause of liberalism in England. A love of liberty had been the principle that had fashioned Fox's political life for many years. He would have been a contemptible man -- which he was not -- had he, for power alone, deserted his basic belief. There is some basis for the accusation that he did just that in his coalition with North in 1783, and even better grounds in his stand on the Regency in 1788, but in the only case other than the French Revolution in which he considered liberalism to be the basic question at issue -- the American War -- Fox had stood by his principles. There is no reason to believe that he had changed in the intervening years. Fox had shown during the coalition negotiations in the early summer of 1792 that he would join the Pitt government only if he could carry his liberal principles into that government,<sup>156</sup> and these principles, which had been unacceptable at that time, would have been less acceptable, even to his own colleagues, at the conclusion of 1792. While there was no doubt a personal factor in Fox's defence of Grey, Sheridan and their friends, both in the spring and in December of 1792, along with that personal loyalty lay Fox's sincere belief in the liberty of the individual.

While Fox may be acquitted of insincerity in the stand he took in December, 1792, he must share in the responsibility for

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155. See supra, p. 127.

156. See supra, p. 126.



the disruption of the Whig party. Fox's actions during December helped to precipitate the break — but so did those of Windham and Elliot. Both sections of the Whigs considered themselves to be right, both refused to consider the other's views, and both were determined to follow their own course. To hold the party together would have taken a man of greater talent than Portland and of less violence than Fox. Like the break between Fox and Burke, the split in the Whigs was inevitable under the circumstances of the tempers and the times.

The separation of the Whigs had far-reaching consequences. For Fox personally the break meant not only the loss of the political affiliation of many old friends, but also the loss of the last vestige of his popularity with the general public. While government supporters only noted small knots of people throughout the country who favored the ideas of Fox, they themselves, none the less, regarded Fox and his followers as mob-readers.<sup>157</sup> Former Whigs considered him to have definite republican leanings.<sup>158</sup> Fox himself mentioned in parliament the handbills which demanded "Destruction to Fox and all his Jacobin crew."<sup>159</sup> The authors of the Annual Register state their support of the seceding Whigs<sup>160</sup> and the whole tone of their summary of events is against Fox and his companions.<sup>161</sup>

For the Whig party, the split had a disastrous effect upon its fortunes for nearly forty years. The large section

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- 157. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 354, 370.
  - 158. H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 203, 209.
  - 159. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 165.
  - 160. Annual Register, 1793, 32, 33.
  - 161. Ibid., 1793, passim.



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which joined the Pitt administration became a part of that government and added to its reactionary character. Headed by Fox, the small Whig core that remained in opposition continued as the official Whig party. This group of men, while ineffectual in size, played a tremendous part in English political life during the next few years. Through their defence of parliamentary reform they had helped precipitate the split in the Whig party, and now, firmly tied to the cause of reform, they remained the only champions of liberalism in the British parliament.



## Chapter X

### REFORM

After the demonstration of violence against the dissenters in Birmingham in 1791 agitation for parliamentary reform in England might well have been expected to disappear gradually. The dissenters had espoused the cause of parliamentary reform, although they were primarily interested in removing the civil restrictions placed upon them by their religious views, because the repeal of the restrictions and the reform of parliament seemed to be inseparably tied. Generally the dissenters were moderate men and their desire was for a moderate reform that would relieve their own disabilities. They had none of the fanaticism that so often accompanies radical thought to uphold them in times of strife. Thus, after the disheartening defeat of the attempts to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts, followed in 1791 by the Birmingham Riots, many dissenters lost faith in the attempt at reform.<sup>1</sup> Strangely enough the English reform movement did not fade with them but soon made tremendous gains. However, there was an essential change in it. New reformers were drawn from the working class whose grievances, to some extent a result of industrial change, were economic rather than religious.<sup>2</sup> The change in the composition of the reform societies was illustrated in the differences between the Manchester Constitution Society formed in 1790 by middle class and professional men, and the society that was organized in Sheffield in late 1791 consisting mainly of working class people.<sup>3</sup> The sectarian aspect remained in the reform movement to some extent but the

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1. Brown, French Revolution in England, 80.

2. Ibid., 56, 62.

3. Ibid., 61.



The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the plane was the cold, crisp air. It was a relief after the stuffy cabin. I looked around and saw a few other passengers, some looking tired and some looking excited. I found my seat and sat down, feeling a bit nervous. The flight attendant came over and asked if I needed anything. I said no, but she smiled and said, "Welcome aboard." The plane took off and I watched the ground disappear below me. I felt a sense of freedom and adventure. The flight was smooth and the crew was professional. I was looking forward to the destination. The plane landed and I stepped out, feeling like a new person. I had completed my journey and I was ready for what was ahead.

reformers themselves admitted that the dissenting element<sup>4</sup> was now a weak one.

The responsibility for the new and significant element in reform rested chiefly with one man - Thomas Paine. In replying to Burke's denunciation of the French Revolution, Paine, in his Rights of Man, supplied a convincing and appealing theory of government. The change in France attracted the attention of the working class to the question of government and illustrated the fact that a change was possible; Paine's book supplied the theory needed as a basis for agitation.<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt of the tremendous influence exerted by Paine on the agitation for parliamentary reform. Proof is supplied both by the words and actions of the reform societies<sup>6</sup> and by those who opposed parliamentary reform. The Rights of Man became the bible of the new movement and the main political literature for the working class for the next forty years.<sup>7</sup>

While Paine supplied the theory for the new reform movement, the means of agitation were supplied by the example of the reformers of the early 1780's. The motive had changed from a desire to curb the power of the crown to the wish for genuine representation of the people in parliament but the early agitation left as a legacy the petition, the definite platform, the publication of reform literature, the most important, the corresponding societies.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, a few of

4. Brown, French Revolution in England, 61.

5. Ibid., 73.

6. Ibid., 61, 64, 65, 71; H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 120, 308, 345; H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 204; Windham, Windham Papers, I, 103, 104; Annual Register, 1792, 172.

7. Butler, Reform Bill, 14.

8. Brown, op. cit., 24, 25.

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the old leaders were still active. The lifetime reformer Major John Cartwright played an important role in the reform revival of the 'nineties.<sup>9</sup> Most important of all as a link between the old and the new was John Horne Tooke.<sup>10</sup>

Stimulated by the example of France and the theory of Paine, independent reform groups were being formed throughout England and Scotland in the latter part of 1791.<sup>II</sup> For some time Horne Tooke acted as the link between many of these and the societies in London.<sup>12</sup> However, the movement would not likely have gained the force it did without the growth of three important London organizations. One of these was the revived old Society for Promoting Constitutional Information, or the Constitutional Society. This group had been still alive, but just alive, in 1791. However, in the spring of 1792 the society suddenly regained its strength. By summer reformers from independent groups were joining and larger quarters were required.<sup>13</sup> The second and most notorious club was the London Corresponding Society formed in January, 1792. One of its founders, a shoemaker named Thomas Hardy, wanted a political and educational society for the working man.<sup>14</sup> With the Corresponding Society his ideal was achieved. The group was well and conveniently organized, and the fees were within the means of a labourer - a penny a week.<sup>15</sup> The chief aim of this society was the publication of reform literature, correspondence with other organi-

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9. Brown, French Revolution in England, 17.

10. Ibid., 51.

11. Ibid., 61, 66.

12. Ibid., 52.

13. Ibid., 53, 63.

14. Ibid., 55, 56.

15. Ibid., 55, 57.



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zations, and the linking of the societies throughout the country for united agitation. The Corresponding Society achieved success in an amazingly short time. By the end of 1792, with the help of Horne Tooke, the society was corresponding with the Sheffield, Manchester and other groups both inside and out of London, as well as with reformers in Scotland.<sup>16</sup> The third of the important London clubs was the famed Friends of the People which, though it included two members of the Constitutional Society, consisted chiefly of liberal members of parliament determined on "gentlemanly politics".<sup>17</sup> Despite the part played by the Friends of the People in the break between the conservative and liberal Whigs, the group was far too aristocratic and too moderate to control what was becoming a working class reform movement. While the Friends of the People, through its members, played an important part in parliament, the main role in the countrywide reform movement was taken by the more notorious, and the more alarming, Corresponding and Constitutional Societies.

The revived movement spread rapidly. The Corresponding Society had hundreds of members by the end of July and probably about three thousand by the fall of 1792. The example of London was contagious and clubs sprang up throughout the country. Many borrowed the more aristocratic title of Friends of the People despite the social strata of their members. However, many of these free lance groups consisted chiefly of middle-class people who again lacked the determination of the radicals

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16. Brown, French Revolution in England, 57.

17. Ibid., 58, 65.

18. Ibid., 54.



and were soon frightened out of the movement by public opinion.<sup>19</sup>

While the Friends of the People and the Corresponding Society were poles apart socially and their social differences were carried into their beliefs on reform, none of the clubs condoned violent action or thought at its inception. The aims of the Friends of the People for more frequent elections and more equal representation were certainly more restricted than the demands of the Corresponding and Constitutional Societies for universal suffrage and annual parliaments,<sup>20</sup> but the Corresponding Society was at first definite in its dislike of violence and most groups were, at least in intention, determined to be moderate.<sup>21</sup>

The societies may not have intended to alarm the public but their actions were not designed to soothe the growing uneasiness which was being strengthened by events in France. The new societies followed the example set in 1789 by the dissenting Revolution Society in sending messages and addresses of congratulation to the French assembly. From the spring of 1792 letters from the individual clubs and joint messages were sent to Paris. An Edinburgh group seems to have been one of the few with discretion enough to abstain from a proposed joint address.<sup>22</sup> After the overthrow of the French monarchy and the beginning of French military victories in the Autumn of 1792, the stream of congratulations from the British societies became a positive

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19. Brown, French Revolution in England, 60.

20. Parliamentary Debates, LVII, 451; LX, 443; Brown, French Revolution in England, 56, 58.

21. Ibid., 54, 57, 60, 62.

22. Ibid., 69.





deluge. The Constitutional Society sent congratulations on the glorious victory of August 10th,<sup>23</sup> as well as a donation of a thousand pair of shoes.<sup>24</sup> The Revolution Society congratulated the French assembly on the military victories and the declaration of the republic.<sup>25</sup> The London Corresponding Society was the most enthusiastic and the most alarming with a message that declared, "Frenchmen, you are already free, and Britons are preparing to become so!"<sup>26</sup> Nor were these the only signs of radicalism. Despite the proclamation against seditious writings in May, 1792, the works of Paine were being sold and read at a tremendous rate.<sup>27</sup> Thomas Paine fled to France in September and with Priestley, Mackintosh and other reformers then in Paris, was suspected of having a hand in the publication of democratic literature to be sent to England.<sup>28</sup> In October, reformers at Sheffield had a public celebration on the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick from France.<sup>29</sup> In December, public attention was directed to a "convention" in Edinburgh of one hundred and forty delegates of Scottish reform societies. The meeting certainly did not escape the eyes and ears of the government. The reforming Scotsmen were deliberately moderate<sup>30</sup> and stressed their desire to keep the peace, but such a declaration was not likely to counteract the fact that the meeting actually took place.

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23. Annual Register, 1792, 73 (Chron.).

24. Ibid., 1792, 126.

25. Ibid., 1792, 72 (Chron.).

26. Ibid., 1792, 70, 71 (Chron.).

27. H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 204; H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 345; Annual Register, 1792, 165, 172.

28. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 209.

29. Annual Register, 1792, 39 (Chron.).

30. Brown, French Revolution in England, 67.



There was by no means whole-hearted concurrence upon these actions among the reform societies themselves. The main dissenting opinion came, of course, from the Friends of the People. The aristocratic background of many of the members of the Friends meant that the society was not really in touch with the majority of the new reform agitators - the working class people. Furthermore, the moderate demands of the Whig society would not likely appeal to people fed upon the strong theories of Paine. Shortly after the founding of the Friends of the People a letter from the Constitutional Society warned that unless the Friends were ready to throw themselves on the popular side, they would fail. The Friends in turn refused to correspond with an organization that sanc-<sup>31</sup> tioned the theories of Paine. An attempt was made to expel Major Cartwright, who was also a member of the Constitutional Society, from the moderate organization. When this failed, Lord John Russell and a few others actually resigned from the<sup>32</sup> Friends of the People. About the same time, in May, 1792, the Sheffield reform society approached the Whig society on the matter of holding a convention. Charles Grey did not refuse but hedged, and the Sheffield group turned instead to the<sup>33</sup> Constitutional Society. From that time onwards the leadership of the reform movement was out of the reach of the moderate reformers.

The distrust of the radical reformers for the moderates

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31. Russell, Life and Times, II, 293, 294; Brown, French Revolution in England, 55.

32. Ibid., 55; Parliamentary Debates, LVII, 460.

33. Brown, op. cit., 62.





is not surprising either when we consider that the parliamentary leader — and hence the political leader — of many members of the Friends of the People was Charles Fox. Horne Tooke had opposed Fox in the Westminster constituency in the 1790 election as a true representative of the people.<sup>34</sup> Certainly it was not difficult to see that Fox was anything but a radical reformer. He had not hesitated to point out that he considered personal freedom to be far more important than political freedom.<sup>35</sup> He had openly declared that he favored an aristocracy as a part of government and that he did not approve of democracy.<sup>36</sup> He had not even joined the moderate Friends of the People. This aloofness may have arisen in part from an attempt to hold the Whig party together, but evidently Fox disapproved of the society in itself,<sup>37</sup> although his disapproval did not reach the height of making an issue of the participation of Grey and other Whigs. In a way this action was typical of Fox's attitude to reform; he did not really approve of methods outside the scope of parliament, yet he hesitated to do anything that might compromise a change of successful reform. Fox agreed that a certain amount of renovation was necessary in both English and Scottish representations,<sup>38</sup> and he and Grey were both agreed that the abuses in them should be corrected immediately to quiet the agitation of the people,<sup>39</sup>

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34. Brown, French Revolution in England, 51.

35. Parliamentary Debates, LIV, 297.

36. Ibid., LII, 95.

37. Russell, Life and Times, II, 281.

38. Russell, Memorials, III, 261; Parliamentary Debates, LII, 211, 212.

39. Ibid., LVII, 450, 467; Windham, Windham Papers, I, 101.



but neither wanted drastic changes. Basically Grey was probably more moderate than Fox. Certainly he later regretted his membership in the Friends of the People,<sup>40</sup> and evidently he would not have joined in 1792 had Fox's opposition to the move been stronger.<sup>41</sup> Fox himself was far more the liberal-minded aristocrat than the ardent reformer. While he defended the dissenters and supported the views of Dr. Price, he deprecated the fact that anything of a political nature should come from the pulpit.<sup>42</sup> He deplored the neighborhood celebration of French victories although he declared himself delighted at these same successes.<sup>43</sup> He was firmly convinced that the original rights of man were the foundation of all government,<sup>44</sup> but he considered Paine's conclusions on that subject to be absurd.<sup>45</sup> Indeed Fox considered both Paine's Rights of Man and Burke's Reflections to be libels on the English and French constitutions respectively.<sup>46</sup> So absurd did he consider Paine's writings that he was convinced that only the good sense and constitutional spirit of the English people were needed to fight them.<sup>47</sup> Grey's views on Paine and the rights of man as a basis of government were those of Fox.<sup>48</sup> Even the conservative Whigs did not consider Fox or the liberal

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40. Butler, Reform Bill, 54.

41. Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, I, 13, 14, cited in Brown, French Revolution in England, 54.

42. Parliamentary Debates LII, 151.

43. Russell, Memorials, II, 308; H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 697.

44. Parliamentary Debates, LIV, 345.

45. Ibid., LVIII, 191.

46. Ibid., LVIII, 38.

47. Parliamentary Debates, LVIII, 191.

48. Annual Register, 1793, 11.





Whigs to be in the same category as those they termed the  
<sup>49</sup>"levellers". There was even a doubt, although an implaus-  
 ible one, of the sincerity of the liberal Whigs as reform-  
<sup>50</sup>ers. It is small wonder that the radical reformers did not  
 trust such a group.

Despite the obvious moderation of one group of reformers  
 and the ostensible moderation of the other, the opposition  
 which had manifest itself so violently against the dissenting  
 reform movement was now focussed on the new reform societies  
 from their inception and grew in step with the societies and  
 with the fury of the events in France. In parliament this  
 opposition showed itself not only in a disapproval of the  
 Friends of the People and their move for reform, but in the  
 rejection of a motion by Charles Fox for the relief of the  
<sup>51</sup>Unitarians, the eventual rejection by the Lords of a measure  
 to abolish the Slave Trade, <sup>52</sup>and finally by the king's pro-  
 clamamation against seditious writings. The latter was not a  
 surprising move for Paine's book especially had long created  
 uneasiness. The Earl of Mornington had warned Grenville in  
 July, 1791, that the book would create discontent among the  
<sup>53</sup>common people. Windham had shown similar concern in May, 1792. <sup>54</sup>  
 While the opinion of the public on the necessity and wisdom of  
<sup>55</sup>the proclamation was at first divided, by September, 1792, the

49. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 699.

50. Ibid., 698

51. Annual Register, 1792, 168.

52. Ibid., 1792, 155.

53. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 120.

54. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 104.

55. Annual Register, 1792, 165.



ministry had received over three hundred addresses in support of their action.<sup>56</sup> At that time Paine's book was still being circulated in cheap editions, but Lord Grenville noted that the magistrates were zealous without prompting in their prosecutions of publishers and booksellers and, he declared, the government must be sure that zeal continued.<sup>57</sup>

A contemporary conservative opinion on the reform societies can be gleaned from the pages of the Annual Register. The formation of the Friends of the People was referred to as an opposition outside parliament of an alarming nature.<sup>58</sup> The societies in general were termed a gathering of the discontented making common cause with atheists and different sects in opposition to the established church and government.<sup>59</sup> More recent accounts claim that the Friends of the People espoused anti-constitutional aims and that the Corresponding Society was a ridiculous copy of French models.<sup>60</sup> It is little wonder, then, that in the minds of the public of 1792 the organizations contained a very real threat. Burke warned the government during the summer of 1792 about the reform societies,<sup>61</sup> and their renewed enthusiasm after the deposition of the French king in August was considered a revival of strength.<sup>62</sup>

The great revulsion in English feeling toward liberalism

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56. Annual Register, 1792, 36. (Chron.).

57. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 308.

58. Annual Register, 1792, 163.

59. Ibid., 1792, 8.

60. Villiers, Grand Whiggery, 127; Russell, Life and Times, II, 292.

61. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, III, 466.

62. Annual Register, 1793, 33.





and reform was brought about by events in France. The abolition of the French monarchy and especially the September massacres at Paris made a tremendous impression in England. Former supporters of the French Revolution, the poet Coleridge and Romilly the law reformer, turned away in disgust. Cowper declared that the French had made him weep for their king and sick of the name of liberty.<sup>63</sup> The victories of the French armies during the fall of 1792 increased the fear of France in England and strengthened the belief that there was a definite French plan to foment civil strife among the English by means of French agents.<sup>64</sup> The logical place to look for French agents seemed to be within the reform movement. This supposition certainly received backing in the stream of addresses from the English clubs to the French assembly and in the assembly's reception of English reformers visiting or resident in France.<sup>65</sup>

Another contribution to the growing alarm in England was a series of sporadic riots throughout the country during the fall.<sup>66</sup> The harvest had been poor and most of the riots probably stemmed from subsequent discontent, but many English were too nervous to give credence to such an obvious cause. In November the Marquis of Buckingham spoke of the "infection" gaining ground and of the disturbances at Sheffield and Nottingham.<sup>67</sup>

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63. Brown, French Revolution in England, 89, 109.

64. H.M.C., Carlisle Papers, 700, 702; H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 315, 326; Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XV, 145; Annual Register 1793, 1.

65. Ibid., 1793, 1; Toynbee, op. cit., XV, 171.

66. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 318, 320; Lecky, History of England, VI, 71.

67. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 327.



Later in the month he expressed the fear that the militia itself was tainted. He commented on a disposition to give some concessions on reform to quiet the agitation -- an action he considered to be the first step to more drastic innovations.<sup>68</sup> Burke was not the only one who feared that weapons were being prepared for a general insurrection.<sup>69</sup> Rumours and fear were spread by pens such as that of Lady Malmesbury who wrote, "To give you an idea how serious the evil is, I will say that even Lord Malmesbury foresees the storm," and she continued, "...as for Fox and Grey, I wish they would utter treason at once and be beheaded and hanged."<sup>70</sup> By early November Pitt himself was becoming alarmed and spoke of the possibility of calling out the militia to quell the riots.<sup>71</sup>

However, the picture was changing late in November and loyalist sentiment was taking the initiative. The Marquis of Buckingham noted that while some moderates were still insisting on the necessity of some measure of parliamentary reform,<sup>72</sup> "sedition" was meeting with more violence. Lord Grenville reported that the loyalty of the people had increased greatly since the French Declarations of mid-November.<sup>73</sup> This surge of loyalty to the government and the established constitution took form in the organization of clubs to counteract the reform societies. The first, instituted at the Crown and Anchor tavern in London during November, declared itself ready to

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68. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 336, 338.

69. Ibid., II, 326.

70. Lascelles, Fox, 242.

71. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 328.

72. Ibid., II, 340.

73. Ibid., II, 341.



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protect liberty and property against republicanism. This club was soon followed by an organization of the merchants of London<sup>74</sup> and by other groups throughout England. A letter to the Earl of Charlemont, which fully illustrates the state of alarm in London, noted that the people had been aroused finally from their lethargy and that parochial meetings were being held to distinguish "friends" from "enemies".<sup>75</sup> Loyalist addressees from various parts of the country similar to those which had favored the May proclamation against seditious writings were being received by the government.<sup>76</sup> No doubt the government had a hand in promoting these,<sup>77</sup> and the ministry had certainly encouraged another policy which did much to harass the reform organizations. In the spring of 1792 an old established club had been turned out of its meeting place by the proprietor because of its policies. In the following months landlords were coerced, if need be, into excluding reformers. A branch of the Corresponding Society was forced to move only five months after the organization had been founded when the license of the proprietor was threatened unless he took such action.<sup>78</sup> By the fall of 1792 this policy of exclusion was general. In Manchester nearly two hundred innkeepers were pledged to boycott dangerous clubs.<sup>79</sup> In Manchester, too, feeling ran so high by December that a loyalist mob came close to creating the havoc that

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74. Annual Register, 1793, 3.

75. H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 203, 204.

76. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 354.

77. Brown, French Revolution in England, 84.

78. Ibid., 83.

79. Ibid., 90.



had been wrought in Birmingham in 1791.

These were not the only precautions taken by the government. The intelligence system had been expanded so that there were informers in most reform societies.<sup>81</sup> Anti-reform and anti-French pamphlets began to appear.<sup>82</sup> In December the prosecutions begun by the trial of Paine during the fall were continued. A dissenting minister was prosecuted for declaring that "His Majesty was placed upon the throne upon conditions of certain laws and rules; and if he does not observe them he has no more right to the throne than the Stuarts had."<sup>83</sup> In addition the government had a warrant out for an ally of Horne Tooke.<sup>84</sup> Early in December the cabinet took direct action by calling out the militia and announcing an early start for the parliamentary session. Even if the ministry had not been so inclined, the state of public opinion would probably have forced some official measures. The action taken seemed to bring, in turn, a renewed surge of loyalty to the government.<sup>85</sup>

The feeling against the reformers reached such heights that the Corresponding Society formally protested that they had no designs against the king, parliament or property.<sup>86</sup> The Constitutional Society denied rumours of their disloyalty. The faint-hearted reformers were disappearing from the reform societies with the growing bellicosity of the loyalists. While

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80. Brown, French Revolution in England, 90; Annual Register, 1792, 48.

81. Brown, op. cit., 85.

82. Ibid., 92.

83. Ibid., 86.

84. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 340.

85. Ibid., II, 359; H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 207.

86. Brown, op. cit., 100.



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the corresponding Society was still thriving at the end of 1792, the Constitutional Society had lost many members.<sup>87</sup> By early 1793 fear of voicing political opinions in public was even expressed by one moderate man.<sup>88</sup> An observation made by Fox two years previously might well have been applicable. In speaking of an earlier age he declared that the times were good from a constitutional point of view but that the people, alarmed by repeated attempts upon their liberty, were too ready to listen to those who wished to take advantage of their fears.<sup>89</sup>

Fox and his followers did not share the general fear of sedition and insurrection<sup>90</sup> but in their opposition to the government's repressive measures they only served further to convince conservatives that all reformers were tarred with the same brush.<sup>91</sup> Despite the moderate type of reform recommended by the liberal Whigs, their criticism of the democrats, and their genuine horror at the bloodshed in France, the public probably paid more attention to the fact that Thomas Erskine, a reforming Whig, had defended Tom Paine at his trial.<sup>92</sup> Certainly by the beginning of 1793 Fox and Sheridan were caricatured as the two extreme leaders of sedition.<sup>93</sup> Even the the Friends' remonstrance to Hardy over the addresses to the

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87. Brown, French Revolution in England, 100.

88. Ibid., 100.

89. Parliamentary Debates, LIII, 280.

90. Russell, Memorials, III, 19; Fox; French Revolution Speeches, 2ff, 39; Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 11ff, 14ff; Annual Register 1793, 13.

91. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 354, 359, 370.

92. Annual Register, 1792, 50 (Chron.).

93. Wright, Caricature History, 481.



French assembly only served to convince the radicals , not conservatives, that the moderates were not really loyal to the cause of reform.<sup>94</sup> This criticism was substantiated in the spring of 1793 when the Corresponding Society approached Fox to present their reform petition to parliament. He did not refuse, but he pointed out that he did not approve of the universal suffrage for which the petition called.<sup>95</sup> The petition was presented by another Whig, but the general difference in attitude between the reformers in parliament and those outside was obvious - to all but the conservative public.

This fact was further emphasized in May or 1793 when Grey presented the reform petition of the Friends of the People. The opposition to Grey's measure showed how parliamentary opinion had been influenced by the actions of the reformers during the fall. Lord Mornington, in one of the major speeches against the motion, pointed out that while he realized the Friends of the People wished a more moderate reform than the other societies, he considered the Friends to be a minority in the reform movement. Once reform was granted, the radical reformers would be in charge - and he judged the radical reformers by their attitudes toward republican France.<sup>96</sup> The argument had added weight in the fact that the measure proposed was not a specific plan but a recommendation that the question of reform be referred to a committee for consideration.<sup>97</sup> Grey declared that

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94. Brown, French Revolution in England, 101.

95. Ibid., 101.

96. Parliamentary Debates, LX, 441-447.

97. Ibid., LX, 385.





no men in their senses would propose to use France as a model,<sup>98</sup> but he did admit that the proposal was for a consideration of a fundamental change in the government.<sup>99</sup> Certainly the approach was more democratic than previous motions for the measure was not only based upon a petition, but the petition offered proof that seventy-one peers and ninety-one commoners elected three hundred and six members and that a majority of the Commons was elected by less than fifteen thousand voters. The length of parliaments, the inequalities of voting restrictions, and the disproportionate representation<sup>100</sup> of the counties were also criticized. Fox, too, cited as ridiculous the fear of France being used as a model for reform. The motion was an attempt to repair, not destroy,<sup>101</sup> the constitution, he said. Fox emphasized the fact that he did not approve of universal suffrage because he did not consider it practical.<sup>102</sup> However, there were parts of his speech that were bound to arouse alarm. He agreed, he said, with Locke in the belief that government originated for, and from, the people. If, as was claimed, a Commons completely representative of the people would abolish the House of Lords and depose the king, then, he said, let them be abolished and dismissed providing the people consider these branches of government to be unnecessary and useless, for the people were not made for the government but the government for the people.

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98. Parliamentary Debates, LX, 379.

99. Ibid., LX, 377.

100. Ibid., LX 375, 376.

101. Ibid., LX, 496, 498.

102. Ibid., LX, 495, 497.

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He was confident, however, that the people would consider all three branches of government necessary and would therefore protect them.<sup>103</sup> That the motion was soundly defeated not only proved the overwhelming opposition in parliament to reform, but went far to prove the claim of the radicals -<sup>104</sup> that petitions to parliament were completely ineffectual.

The reformers, both radical and moderate, were now in an extremely awkward position. Reform had been soundly defeated in parliament. The majority of the public was convinced by the contacts of the reform movement with the French republic, and by the demands for universal suffrage, that any concession would bring a revolution such as the one they were witnessing in France. The reformers were not only in the position of defending a regicide republic but, after the French declaration of war on England in February, 1793, they were also associated in the public mind with an enemy power. Fox and his friends were caught between the fire from both camps. While committed to reform the Foxites were suspected of disloyalty by the majority of the reform movement. To the general public the liberal Whigs were a seditious and treacherous faction, not only through their support of reform, but through their declared opposition to the war that was then in progress.

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103. Parliamentary Debates, LX, 503, 504.

104. Brown, French Revolution in England, 103.





FOX AND THE WAR WITH FRANCE

Charles Fox stated his opposition to a war with the French republic when the fear of French arms rather than French principles first appeared in England in November, <sup>1</sup> 1792. His objection was not simply blind obstinacy stemming from the favor with which he looked upon the French Revolution. Fox certainly did not approve of the violence in French domestic affairs, <sup>2</sup> nor did he condone the French decrees of November and December offering assistance to the people of other nations in overthrowing their established government, for this <sup>3</sup> he considered to be a hostile act. However, he was convinced that despite the decrees the internal affairs of France did not provide just cause for a declaration of war by another <sup>4</sup> nation. This was the basis upon which he condemned Austria and Prussia in their war with France. Justice was on the side of France, Fox believed, for Austria and Prussia were obviously <sup>5</sup> trying to interfere in the internal affairs of that country. Fox defended the recent French conquests -- even that of Belgium -- as the natural result of the invasion of France by <sup>6</sup> Austria and Prussia. To Fox, the motives and actions of these allies were exemplified by the famed manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick which he considered not only offensive to the French

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1. Russell, Memorials, II, 310.

2. Ibid., II, 301, 302, 304.

3. Ibid., II, 20; Russell, Life and Times, II, 334; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 42; Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 286.

4. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, I2, 45; Russell, Life and Times, II, 336; Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 289.

5. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 23.

6. Russell, Memorials, III, 310; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 66.

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but a violation of every principle sacred to Englishmen.

This was not a popular attitude amid the growing alarm and the propensity to war in England during the closing weeks of 1792. English apprehension centred generally on two questions: the danger to England herself from France and French principles, and French intentions toward the Netherlands. On these, too, Fox differed from the general opinion for he insisted that there was neither danger to England in the propagation of French principles, nor imminent danger of an invasion of England by French armed forces. However, Fox was not oblivious to the eventual danger from a victorious and enthusiastic French army with its growing nationalistic spirit, and he gave his full support to the augmentation of the English army and navy in late December, 1792. Indeed, he declared in parliament that he could not agree with Lord Wycombe that nothing short of invasion would justify England's participation in a war.

Fox's main disagreement with the majority of the English parliament and public was on the importance of the French decree opening the Scheldt to navigation, the method of dealing with this, and the danger of a French attack upon Holland. Fox was well aware of the part played by the Low Countries in the

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7. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 5.

8. Ibid., 2-4, 39, 40, 44, 45; Russell, Memorials, III, 19.

9. Ibid., III, 19.

10. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 186, 285; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 42.

11. Ibid., 39, 43; Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 186, 196, 233.

12. Ibid., LIX, 16, 34.





security of England. He was suspicious of French intentions  
<sup>13</sup>  
 toward the Dutch and he admitted that if the Dutch were  
 attacked, England must uphold her treaty and go to their  
<sup>14</sup>  
 assistance. However, Fox did not believe the opening of  
 the Scheldt in itself was sufficient reason for war with  
<sup>15</sup>  
 France. While the Scheldt was guaranteed by treaty, he con-  
 sidered that all nations had an interest in the question and  
 that negotiation was the correct solution. Fox was quite cer-  
<sup>16</sup>  
 tain that the Dutch themselves took this view. There was no  
<sup>17</sup>  
 point, said Fox, in forcing the Dutch into a war.

Fox's views were generally followed by the liberal Whigs.  
 Sheridan presented them to the French when he told the envoy  
 in London, Chauvelin, that while the liberal Whigs were strong  
 advocates of peace, they neither approved the French decrees  
<sup>18</sup>  
 of November nor would condone a French attack upon Holland.  
 When the parliamentary session opened in December, 1792, the  
<sup>19</sup>  
 Foxites staunchly advocated a policy of peaceful settlement.  
 Fox stated time and time again during the early part of the  
 session that he did not favor a war with France if it could be  
 avoided with honour, and while he was not optimistic, he thought  
 that conflict might be avoided if England would consent to neg-  
<sup>20</sup>  
 otiate on all points of disagreement. The liberal Whig criticism

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13. Russell, Memorials, II, 310.

14. Ibid., III, I9.

15. Ibid., III, I9.

16. Ibid., III, 20; Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 285; Fox:  
Revolution Speeches, I3, 42;

17. Ibid., 42.

18. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 87; Lecky, History of  
 England, VII, I24.

19. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, passim.

20. Ibid., LIX, 34, I86; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, I2, 26,  
 27, 52.

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country, and the second part with the specific details of the various districts. The first part is divided into two sections, the first of which deals with the general situation of the country, and the second with the specific details of the various districts. The second part is divided into three sections, the first of which deals with the general situation of the country, and the second with the specific details of the various districts. The third part is divided into four sections, the first of which deals with the general situation of the country, and the second with the specific details of the various districts. The fourth part is divided into five sections, the first of which deals with the general situation of the country, and the second with the specific details of the various districts.

1. General situation of the country	2. Specific details of the various districts	3. General situation of the country	4. Specific details of the various districts	5. General situation of the country	6. Specific details of the various districts
7. General situation of the country	8. Specific details of the various districts	9. General situation of the country	10. Specific details of the various districts	11. General situation of the country	12. Specific details of the various districts
13. General situation of the country	14. Specific details of the various districts	15. General situation of the country	16. Specific details of the various districts	17. General situation of the country	18. Specific details of the various districts
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25. General situation of the country	26. Specific details of the various districts	27. General situation of the country	28. Specific details of the various districts	29. General situation of the country	30. Specific details of the various districts

of the ministry stemmed from the belief that the government was not making an honest attempt to preserve the peace. As Fox pointed out during the debate on the speech from the throne, the main stumbling block to negotiations with France was the lack of an English minister in Paris. He accused the government of neglecting this necessary means of communication simply because France had become a republic.<sup>21</sup> The recall of Lord Gower on the overthrow of the French king in August had been a mistake, Fox said.<sup>22</sup> To remedy this, and not because he approved the administration at Paris, Fox proposed the appointment of a minister to France.<sup>23</sup> Fox believed that negotiation in the past might have prevented the events in France which had so shocked the English public. The prudent policy now, he said, was to recognize the government of France and attempt to reach some agreement.<sup>24</sup>

Fox's motion for a minister to Paris was violently opposed in parliament for many members apparently felt that war with France was preferable to the odium which would be incurred by the recognition of a nation which they considered contemptible.<sup>25</sup> By December 28th, when the Alien Bill appeared before the Commons, war with France seemed to be almost taken for granted by some members.<sup>26</sup> Fox, however, was convinced still that negotiation

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21. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 12.

22. Ibid., 31, 32.

23. Ibid., 30.

24. Ibid., 23, 24.

25. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 66, 67, 96, 99, 111, 120, 121.

26. Ibid., LIX, 226, 227, 228, 259.





might have a beneficial effect upon the rapidly worsening relations between the two countries.<sup>27</sup> Even if the negotiations did not succeed, Fox declared, they would at least clarify the<sup>28</sup> object of war and the basis upon which peace could be obtained. Indeed these were the grounds upon which Fox defended his desire for a minister to France to his Westminster constituents. If England was to go to war, declared Fox, the reasons for that war must be just and intelligible. She must know what she wished France to concede and she must be sure that these concessions<sup>29</sup> could not be obtained by negotiations.

Fox's criticism of government action during this crisis was summed up in his speeches on the bill to augment the armed forces on February 1, 1793, and during the discussion in parliament on the outbreak of hostilities with France on February 12, 1793. The declared causes of the war, Fox said, were the danger to Holland and to Europe from France, and the French decrees of November. However, Holland was not anxious to go to war over the Scheldt, Fox declared, and she had not asked England formally for aid.<sup>30</sup> The November decree offering assistance to the people of Europe Fox considered to be an insult to England, but he did think the French might have offered

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27. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 286; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 43.

28. Ibid., 46.

29. Ibid., 53-55.

30. Rose in his Pitt and the Great War, (p.77), states that the Dutch, through their agent in London, did ask for English aid on November, 29th, but Pitt himself later admitted that they had made no formal request for English support in regard to the Scheldt (Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 391).



an explanation of it or been more conciliatory had the English ministers definitely stated what they required as satisfaction. As for the safety of Europe, Fox pointed out that the ministers had done nothing to prevent the invasion of France by Austria and Prussia, nor had they made any attempt to save Poland from partition by these nations and Russia.<sup>31</sup> He further considered that the French had some justification in their claim that England had broken her commercial treaty with France by stopping shipments of corn to that country in December, 1792. Fox criticized ministerial conduct as neither candid nor conciliatory, and he certainly considered that the English had ended the unofficial negotiations with Chauvelin by dismissing him after the execution of Louis XVI. However, Fox considered that the greatest blunder of the ministers was that they had never placed specific terms before the French.<sup>32</sup>

Was Fox justified in his assertion that the ministry had mishandled the crisis with France? Until the latter part of November, 1792, Pitt and Grenville had been just as determined on peace as Fox.<sup>33</sup> So strong had been their desire for English neutrality that when Austria and Prussia, whom they considered to be bent upon war, finally did become entangled with France the spring of 1792, the English ministers made no effort to

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31. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 65, 66, 67.

32. The Modern Orator, II, 496-502.

33. Russell, Memorials, III, 8, 9; Lecky, History of England, VII, 65, 67-69; Rose Pitt and the Great War, 69.





interfere.<sup>34</sup> Even George III, who was certainly anti-French, obviously wanted to uphold English neutrality, for in September, 1792, he stated that while he wished to help the French royal family he did not want to involve England in the internal disturbances in France.<sup>35</sup> Like the king, however, Grenville's sympathies at least were with the progress of the Duke of Brunswick against the French.<sup>36</sup> The attitude of the English ministers on English neutrality began to change with the November proclamations of the French. These, Grenville believed, were an attempt by the French to drive England either to war or to complete isolation from affairs on the Continent.<sup>37</sup> Pitt's views were much the same. He considered the decrees to be a gross disregard of existing treaties and an encouragement to revolution in other countries. If the French persisted in upholding the decrees he was certain that a rupture with France could not be avoided.<sup>38</sup>

There were other difficulties in the way of continued peaceful relations between France and England. On November 13th, the English government committed itself to assisting the Dutch in the event of a French attack upon the Netherlands. This promise was made public on the same day that the

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34. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 46. Rose claims that English interference on the side of France would not have changed the situation as the French had already decided that their sole chance of safety lay in the conquest of Austria's Belgic provinces (Ibid., 47).

35. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 317.

36. Russell, Memorials, III, 7; Lecky, History of England, VII, 48.

37. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 341, 344.

38. Rose, op. cit., 73, 74.



French convention decreed the opening of the Scheldt. The notification of the English stand was too late to deter the French government. Hence both countries were publicly committed to opposing courses.<sup>39</sup>

Another factor in the growing crisis with France was the personal relationship between the English ministers and the French envoy in London. The aloofness of both Grenville and Pitt certainly did not have a conciliatory effect on the rather touchy Chauvelin, and the tone they adopted after the publication of the November decrees was far from friendly.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, the increased arrogance of Chauvelin and the French foreign minister coming with the victories of French arms<sup>41</sup> could not have aided relations with the English ministers and evidently no attempt was made to calm the enthusiasm and aggressive spirit of the French convention.<sup>42</sup> Chauvelin, too, was in an awkward position in England, for he had been originally the accredited agent of Louis XVI in England and after the overthrow of the French monarchy he still was accepted in England only on that basis.<sup>43</sup>

Unfortunately the crisis between France and England turned on French intentions toward the Scheldt and the Netherlands and on the formal exchange of ambassadors between France and England - questions upon which each country was determined to have its own view prevail. The English ministers were firm

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39. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 74, 75.

40. Ibid., 78, 79, 101; Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 343, 344.

41. Lecky, History of England, VII, 117, 118.

42. Rose, op. cit., 95, 97, 101.

43. Annual Register, 1793, 116 (State Papers).



The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the cold. It was a sharp contrast to the warm blanket I had been sitting under. I looked up at the sky, which was a pale, hazy blue. The air was still, and the only sound I could hear was the distant hum of traffic. I took a deep breath, feeling the cold air fill my lungs. It was a strange sensation, but it felt like a fresh start. I walked towards the building, my steps echoing on the wet pavement. The building was a large, imposing structure with many windows. Some of the windows were lit up, while others were dark. I felt a sense of anticipation as I approached the entrance. The door was slightly ajar, and I pushed it open. Inside, the room was dimly lit, with a single lamp casting a warm glow. I walked towards the lamp, feeling a sense of comfort. The room was empty, except for a small table and a chair. I sat down, feeling a sense of peace. The cold air was still in my lungs, but it no longer felt like a burden. It felt like a gift. I looked out the window, watching the world go by. The cars were moving, the lights were flashing, but I felt like I was in a different world. A world where everything was just as it should be. I closed my eyes, feeling a sense of calm. The world was still, and I was still. It was a perfect moment, and I knew I would never forget it.

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in their determination that the decrees of November must be retracted.<sup>44</sup> The French flatly refused to do this early in December, and they also refused to negotiate except on a basis of English acceptance of a fully accredited French ambassador.<sup>45</sup> While there seems to have been some talk among members of the English government in November of the possibility of recognizing the French republic,<sup>46</sup> there is no proof that Grenville and Pitt favored such a step, and certainly early in December George III stated that he would not consider recognition although he was not averse to unofficial negotiations.<sup>47</sup>

The decree of the French convention on December 15, 1792, instructing French generals to suppress existing authorities in conquered countries and to set up governments modelled on that of France,<sup>48</sup> stiffened anti-French feeling in England. Grenville's views were uncompromising in a letter to Chauvelin on December 31, 1792. He refused to acknowledge Chauvelin except as a representative of the French king; he thought the English view of the November decrees justified by the attitude of the French convention; the French, he believed, had respected neither the neutrality of Holland nor the guarantee of the Scheldt,<sup>49</sup> and the French certainly must renounce their policy of aggression. Early in January the French complained of the approval by the English parliament of the Alien Bill and English action in

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44. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 77.

45. Ibid., 84.

46. H.M.C., Portescue Papers, 11, 339.

47. Rose, Op. cit., 82.

48. Lecky, History of England, VII, 122.

49. Annual Register, 1793, 116-118 (State Papers); Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 348-352.

The first part of the report is devoted to a general  
description of the country and its resources. It  
then proceeds to a detailed account of the  
various industries and occupations of the  
people. The third part of the report  
contains a list of the principal towns and  
villages, and a description of the  
climate and the seasons. The fourth part  
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principal rivers and lakes, and a  
description of the flora and fauna.

The fifth part of the report contains a list of the  
principal mountains and hills, and a description of the  
geology and the minerals. The sixth part of the  
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December in halting grain destined for French ports. Grenville<sup>50</sup> refused to discuss either complaint with Chauvelin. The invasion of Holland evidently was decided upon by the French on January 10th,<sup>51</sup> but the French order for the recall of Chauvelin on January 22nd apparently was intended to delay if not prevent the rupture between France and England.<sup>52</sup> However, the attempt was too late for on the news of the execution of Louis XVI, George III ordered the French envoy out of the country.<sup>53</sup> Last minute, and probably unofficial, attempts by Dumouriez to discuss matters with the English ambassador to Holland were forestalled by the French<sup>54</sup> declaration of war.

Fox's criticism of the English refusal to recognize the French government was just, but the responsibility does not lie solely with Pitt and Grenville for there is little likelihood that George III would have allowed his ministers to make such a move even if they had been so inclined. Furthermore, there is little doubt that if the administration had sent any type of envoy to Paris there would have been a<sup>55</sup> tremendous outcry from parliament and from the public. There were added difficulties in the path of peace in the fact that both governments had committed themselves publicly on Dutch affairs - a position from which any nation has difficulty in

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50. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 352, 353, 355, 356, 358; Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 103-105.

51. Lecky, History of England, VII, 141.

52. Ibid., VII, 158, 159.

53. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 371, 372.

54. Rose, op. cit., 109.

55. Annual Register, 1793, 34. Fox's motion for a minister to France was condemned by most of parliament and the public.





retreating.

However, there is some justification in Fox's criticism of the attitude of the ministers. Pitt and Grenville seem to have made up their minds before the beginning of December that nothing short of a complete retraction of the November decrees would be satisfactory.<sup>56</sup> Such an attitude, while understandable after the flat refusal of the French on December 9th to retract the decrees and their declaration of December 15th enlarging upon them, was hardly conducive to successful negotiation at any time. Certainly the determination of the English ministers to uphold the neutrality of Holland was justified, but surely the matter of the navigation of the Scheldt, despite its guarantee by treaty, was of interest to a sufficient number of nations to justify at least an attempt at negotiation. Despite Pitt's claim that the treaty was a cornerstone of the balance of power,<sup>57</sup> a compromise on the Scheldt would have been better than war.

Fox's claim that the ministers did not state England's terms clearly and explicitly to France was a sound criticism of government policy. As Grenville formulated these terms at the close of 1792 they contained at least a basis for negotiation: the abandonment by France of her conquests, the rescinding of decrees injurious to other nations and a pledge by France to keep the Scheldt agreement. In return the European nations would abandon hostile views or actions against France and

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56. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 73, 74; Lecky, History of England, VII, 85.

57. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 298.



interference in France's domestic affairs, and diplomatic relations would be maintained with the existing French government.<sup>58</sup> These aims the ministers made known to Russia, Austria and Prussia, but they were not known in either England or France until 1800.<sup>59</sup>

There was justification, too, for Fox's claim that if the ministry intended to interfere in affairs on the Continent, that action should have been taken on the formation of an alliance against France in the spring of 1792.<sup>60</sup> There is certainly a strong possibility that without the external threat the domestic affairs of France might not have reached the height of violence they did during the summer and fall of 1792. Even if France had determined upon her course in relation to Austria's Belgic provinces and English interference<sup>61</sup> would have been to no avail at that time, a definite stand by England in the early fall of 1792 might have restrained France to some extent. Pitt should have realized the direction in which France was moving with the conquest of Savoy and Nice in September and certainly with the capture by the French of several German cities in October.<sup>62</sup> A public statement of England's determination to uphold its treaty with Holland and the guarantee of the Scheldt might have made the French hesitate, for until the early fall of 1792 at least the French

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58. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 100.

59. Ibid., 115; Russell, Life and Times, II, 302.

60. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 23.

61. Rose, op. cit., 47, 48.

62. Pitt himself later admitted that the conquest of Savoy had shown the direction of French ambition (Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 388).





were anxious that England maintain her neutrality. While the French viewed English motives and intentions with growing suspicion by November,<sup>64</sup> even at that time Chauvelin was evidently uncertain as to what course of action Pitt would take.<sup>65</sup> Pitt's determination upon strict neutrality was unfortunate for it led him to watch French activities with apathy until Holland itself was threatened.

Fox, too, has earned a good deal of criticism for his actions and attitude just prior to the outbreak of war. Some of this criticism is justified for, as Pitt overestimated the danger of insurrection in England, so Fox underestimated the danger to England from France. Indeed, Fox does not seem to have been fully aware of the degree of French enthusiasm for war or the internal dissensions that were pushing many in France to favor war. However, the claim that Fox's "wrong-headedness" or party spirit prevented a unanimous front supporting the government and king on the opening of parliament, and so encouraged the French to re-affirm and extend the November decrees,<sup>66</sup> is questionable. Surely the French could not have thought Pitt lacked support in view of the huge majority (290 to 50) which he received on the speech from the throne. Furthermore, Chauvelin had evidently noted the the swing of public support to the government during December.<sup>67</sup>

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63. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 43, 47; Lecky, History of England, VII, 57-59.

64. Ibid., VII, 60.

65. Ibid., VII, 64, 65.

66. Rose, op. cit., 90.

67. Ibid., 87; Lecky, op. cit., VII, 123.



Fox cannot deserve all the blame for giving the French an unfortunate view of British opinion, for if the French paid enough attention to the British parliament to be encouraged by Fox's opposition, they must have been equally annoyed by the invectives against France on the part of government members and by Pitt himself.

Actually Fox's consideration of the question of war and the danger to England was probably clouded by his suspicion that Pitt was using the internal and external danger to the country for his own purposes - to split the Whig party. Pitt's suspicion of French intentions was probably affected by his firm belief in the danger within England from French principles.

The attitude of both men must be considered against the background of British public opinion. There is much to be said for the contention that if France had not declared war, the English public would have forced England to do so. The Annual Register both states and reflects the opinion that France was determined to provoke a war and that England had no choice. On December 21st Lord Auckland stated that he hoped the war with France might be delayed although he knew that such a delay would be unpopular in England. Opinions voiced in parliament showed not only dislike of France (which could be expected from conservative members) but also a strong disapproval of negotiation with her. Indeed, Windham declared

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68. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 50, 51, 59, 99, 111, 121, 122, 295, 298.

69. Fitzmaurice, Shelburne, II, 402.

70. Annual Register, 1793, 2, 32, 33, 98, 99.

71. Lecky, History of England, VII, 93.

72. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 99, 102, 110, 121, 122, 126.





at the end of January, 1793, that war was inevitable: it was only a question of time.<sup>73</sup> Any hope of calming the rising passion of the British public had ended with the "universal indignation"<sup>74</sup> aroused by the execution of the French king. While a different policy on the part of the ministers might have succeeded in avoiding a rupture with France before the beginning of December, after that time any minister would have had great difficulty in stemming the tide.

Once England was actually at war Charles Fox declared his loyalty to England and his determination to support English participation in the war.<sup>75</sup> However, Fox did not intend to support the ministry unquestioningly, and indeed, he said as much.<sup>76</sup> He never did agree with the necessity of England's participation in the war.<sup>77</sup> Once war was declared Charles Fox wanted a peace that was honourable to England and one that would leave her in a secure position, but he wanted that peace as soon as possible.<sup>78</sup> Thus his policy from 1793 until the secession of the Foxite Whigs from parliament in 1797 was aimed at a return to peace. To this end he attempted to ascertain the specific aims of the war, to criticize what he considered to be the blunders in policy which retarded the success of British forces, and to persuade parliament that

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73. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 421.

74. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 373; Annual Register, 1793, 3 (Chron.); Lecky, History of England, VII, 156.

75. Russell, Memorials, III, 34; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 83.

76. Ibid., 83.

77. Ibid., passim.

78. Ibid., 95.



peace could be obtained if England would consent to negotiate with France.

In discussing England's situation in both 1795 and 1796 Fox declared that the fundamental error in the government's war policy had been their refusal from the start to state whether or not they intended to interfere in the internal affairs of France and what they hoped to achieve by war.<sup>79</sup> Fox was uneasy over the motive of the English government in going to war as well as the ends which it hoped to achieve by war not only from his fear that the old despotism might be re-imposed upon France, but because he felt that a war aimed at changing the government of another nation could drag on indefinitely.<sup>80</sup> He also believed that if the English government was at war against French principles, the English public had been deluded into fighting a war they would not have supported had they known its true aim.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, Fox felt that if the English government could be persuaded to state definitely what was wanted of France, these demands<sup>82</sup> might form a basis for negotiation and for peace.

Fox's belief that the English ministers had not really tried to avoid the war with France led him to view their avowed motives for war and aims for peace with misgiving.<sup>83</sup> Fox had always been suspicious of Pitt and the minister's obvious dislike and distrust of French principles, which had

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79. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 275, 281, 346.

80. Ibid., 64, 71, 72.

81. Ibid., 111.

82. Ibid., 79, 95.

83. Ibid., 76, 83.





manifested itself in the government's emergency measures to-  
<sup>84</sup>  
 ward the end of 1792, made Fox uneasy about the English  
 ministry's intentions toward France once the two countries  
 were at war. Certainly one of the first things Fox noted  
 after the declaration of war was that while Pitt, in moving  
 an address to the king, cited French aggressions as the  
 cause of the war, Powys, in seconding the motion, declared  
<sup>85</sup>  
 that France under any government should be opposed. If  
 England was at war for specific purposes, Fox said, then the  
 object of that war might be attained, but if the reason was  
 disapproval of the French nation, then the war was one of  
 extermination. The arguments of most government supporters,  
<sup>86</sup>  
 declared Fox, seemed to favor the extermination of France.  
 Fox's fears that England might espouse "unjustifiable" war  
 aims were heightened by the talk of alliances with Austria,  
 Prussia and Russia. He believed that if England joined a  
 coalition whose war aims differed from her own, she might be  
<sup>87</sup>  
 led away from her own true objectives.

Fox not only attempted to obtain a statement from the  
 ministers on England's intentions during discussions on the  
 war and English policy but brought motions before parliament  
 for that express purpose during the remainder of the session  
 in 1793. In February, he presented a series of resolutions

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84. See Chapter X, 160, 161, 162.

85. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 445ff, 460; Fox: French  
 Revolution Speeches, 75, 76.

86. Ibid., 76.

87. Parliamentary Debates, LX, 61; Fox: French Revolution  
 Speeches, 86, 87, 92, 101.



stating that England was not at war to change the type of government in France and that she would not refuse a peace even though it excluded her allies. However, any additional support Fox might have gained from those who agreed with these sentiments was lost by the inclusion of a declaration that the government had not taken the proper measures to prevent war. <sup>88</sup>

Fox also asked parliament to declare its disapproval of a memorial sent by Lord Auckland to the Dutch States-General in April. The terms, he said, in which this paper referred to France implied the intention of England to interfere in <sup>89</sup> the domestic affairs of France.

In June, 1793, Fox, in making the first of the many motions that the liberal Whigs presented for peace, again tried to force the ministers into a definite statement. He declared that the war could not continue if it was to be based on the original grounds of the defence of England and Holland from French aggression. England, he claimed, could now make peace with safety for Holland was secure from attack and the conduct of Russia and Prussia over Poland had again illustrated that the safety of Europe was endangered by others <sup>90</sup> than France. To Fox the war was being waged only for the defence and security of England and he considered that object <sup>91</sup> had been achieved. Pitt, however, denied that England could

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88. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 85, 86, 92, 96.

89. Ibid., 97.

90. Ibid., 106-109.

91. Ibid., 114.



The first of these is the fact that the  
 Government has not been able to secure  
 the necessary funds to carry out its  
 policy of non-interference in the  
 internal affairs of the country.  
 The second is the fact that the  
 Government has not been able to secure  
 the necessary funds to carry out its  
 policy of non-interference in the  
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In the first place, the Government  
 has not been able to secure the  
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 has not been able to secure the  
 necessary funds to carry out its  
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 internal affairs of the country.

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100.	100.	100.
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98.	98.	98.
97.	97.	97.

rest content with France's relinquishment of her European conquests. He denied also that reparations or security could be obtained from the existing French government. The best security for England, said Pitt, would be an end to the wild, ungoverned system in France.<sup>92</sup> This statement was the nearest Pitt had come to admitting that the domestic affairs of France played a part in the attainment of peace.

Pitt had certainly showed his dislike of French principles on many occasions and had specifically stated his distrust of them in parliament shortly before the outbreak of war.<sup>93</sup> However, he had cited French territorial ambitions, particularly in the Low Countries, as the specific causes of the war between England and France.<sup>94</sup> Actually, Pitt and Grenville seem to have been concerned only with the security of England and certainly, at first, they tried to avoid either a war of principle or one of conquest.<sup>95</sup> In March, 1793, Pitt defended Auckland's memorial to the Dutch as being without definite meaning and declared that while he wished that the English government might negotiate with others than those in power in France, the real object of England was to repel and, if possible, to chastise France and to gain future security.<sup>96</sup> But security is an indefinite thing and obviously by the time

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92. Parliamentary Debates, LX, 672-677.

93. Ibid., LIX, 384ff.

94. Ibid., LIX, 445.

95. Russell, Memorials, III, 32; Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 119; H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 415ff.

96. Parliamentary Debates, LX, 303, 306, 312.



Fox made his motion for peace in June, Pitt had become more skeptical of obtaining peace and security with a republican France across the Channel, although he was not yet ready to assert the necessity of interference in French internal affairs before ending the war. While Pitt had not committed the English government to favoring any particular type of administration in France, by the fall of 1793 he did state that a constitutional monarchy in France would be the most suitable type of government, although this view did not preclude English negotiation with another type of government, providing that government was firmly established.<sup>97</sup> However, as England became more and more entangled in her alliances on the Continent, Pitt's concept of the war widened beyond his original idea of security for England,<sup>98</sup> and as the ferocity of French domestic affairs grew and culminated in the Reign of Terror, Pitt found himself<sup>99</sup> drawn more and more to the cause of royalism in France.

This attitude had a good deal of support in England. From the beginning, men such as Burke and George III considered the war to be one for the restoration of the French monarchy.<sup>100</sup>

Windham, another violent supporter of a war to change the government of France,<sup>101</sup> was much opposed to any attempt by the ministry<sup>102</sup> to negotiate with France. Lord Auckland, too, was convinced

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97. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 438.

98. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 139.

99. Ibid., 162.

100. Ibid., 119; Russell, Memorials, III, 31; H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 393, 397.

101. Parliamentary Debates, LX, 665; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 220; Windham, Windham Papers, I, 170.

102. Ibid., II, 1, 2, 3, 19, 24.





that England should interfere in French domestic politics if  
the opportunity arose,<sup>103</sup> and there were other prominent men  
who entertained similar sentiments.<sup>104</sup> The aggressiveness of  
France united these men and those who distrusted French arms  
in a common fear for the fate of England.<sup>105</sup> When his followers  
included men who agreed with the sentiments of Burke and the  
king, Pitt could not make any definite statement of the govern-  
ment's attitude toward interference in French domestic affairs,  
at least until he agreed more closely with their reactionary  
view. When he did, his stand was echoed throughout England.  
By the spring of 1794 Fox was certain that not only the govern-  
ment but also most of the members wished to continue the war  
until the monarchy could be restored in France.<sup>106</sup> The majority  
of the public, too, appeared to take this view.<sup>107</sup> Another sign  
of the growth of reactionary feeling in England toward the war  
with France,<sup>108</sup> was the agreement of the Duke of Portland, who  
in January, 1794 was still opposed to a coalition with Pitt,<sup>109</sup>  
to join the government in a coalition in July of that year.

Pitt's obvious leaning toward a restoration of the French  
monarchy persuaded Fox to attempt again to get an explicit de-  
claration on the object of the war with France at the beginning

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103. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 455.  
104. Windham, Windham Papers, II, 27; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 121; Parliamentary Debates, LXII, 23ff.  
105. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 119.  
106. Russell, Memorials, III, 71; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 155, 157, 160.  
107. Annual Register, 1794, 179.  
108. The effect of this attitude on English domestic affairs will be dealt with in the following chapter.  
109. Windham, op. cit., I, 201-207.





of the parliamentary session of 1794. During the debate on the throne speech Fox declared that while Pitt had stated the previous year that negotiations would be possible if the Scheldt and Holland were safe from French attack, now the object of the war appeared to be the subversion of the ruling power in France.<sup>110</sup> Fox was convinced that if England wanted only an honourable and secure peace, she should be willing to negotiate with any type of government. He admitted that a peace with the existing French government would not be as secure as one could wish, but such a peace would probably be as safe as any previous peace with France.<sup>111</sup> Pitt denied that the English would insist on the restoration of the French monarchy before making peace with France,<sup>112</sup> but he evidently changed his mind by the end of the year. When parliament reconvened on December 30, 1794, it was evident from the throne speech that the government considered the continuation of the war a necessity despite the negotiations the Dutch were making for peace with France.<sup>113</sup> Fox's previous claim that the ministry would lose support if the war was fought to change the government of France<sup>114</sup> was vindicated in the objection by Pitt's friend and follower, Wilberforce, who declared that the speech from the throne pledged England to war until a counterrevolution was achieved in France.<sup>115</sup> When Fox noted that this was the

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110. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 122.

111. Ibid., 127, 128.

112. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 198; Parliamentary Debates, LXII, 176, 179.

113. Ibid., LXV, 17, 18.

114. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 111.

115. Ibid., 219; Parliamentary Debates, LXV, 27, 28.





first time parliament had actually been asked to declare that peace would not be made except with a monarchical French government, Pitt (who had denied this intention when Fox charged him with it the previous January) now claimed that the government had stated previously that it would deal only with a monarchical government.<sup>116</sup> Fox had finally elicited a definite declaration of the object of the war with France.

Fox and his followers had not confined their activities in parliament after the outbreak of war to attempts to obtain the terms upon which the conflict could be ended. Indeed, the Annual Register notes that from the beginning of the session in December, 1792, the opposition, though diminished in numbers,<sup>117</sup> had increased in energy and activity. When a member of parliament deprecated their continued opposition to the ministers, Fox declared that the suspension of opposition would be the suspension of the most valuable part of the constitution -- the vigilance of parliament over the executive power.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, as Fox considered that war between England and France had broken out through the mismanagement of the English ministers, he did not see why the ministry should expect the implicit confidence<sup>119</sup> of parliament.

While the basis of Fox's opposition to the ministers -- Pitt's handling of the crisis with France prior to the declaration of war -- is controversial, there is room for criticism of the government's management of the war. Pitt was slow in

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116. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 221; Parliamentary Debates, LXV, 57.

117. Annual Register, 1793, 69.

118. Parliamentary Debates, LX, 578.

119. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 77.





getting the country on an efficient war footing. Until late in 1794 the Admiralty was headed by the inefficient Earl of Chatham. Dundas attempted to manage three vitally important offices until the summer of 1794.<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, Pitt's ever-present optimism (shared by Austria and Prussia) that France would soon collapse through her internal troubles, led to a greater concern for the spoils of war than for the conduct of the campaigns.<sup>121</sup>

While the liberal Whigs seldom missed an opportunity of criticizing the ministry's handling of the original dispute with France,<sup>122</sup> they did offer constructive suggestions for the conduct of the war. As Fox stated in March, 1793, supporting blunders of the ministers was not the best way of winning the war; the more vigorous the prosecution of the war, the more quickly an honourable and adequate peace might be obtained. At this time Fox was highly critical of the delay in sending forces to the aid of Holland. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Fox declared, brought all his warlike preparations to the House; his negotiations, too, had been warlike; only his preparations for war were pacific.<sup>123</sup> Fox was also critical of the government's attitude toward the neutral powers. Every nation, whether large or small, had a right to neutrality, Fox declared,<sup>124</sup> and the attempts of the English

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120. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 125.

121. Ibid., 126; Parliamentary Debates, LX, 675.

122. It was a prominent topic in debates for several years but the Whig stand on the dispute was adequately covered by Grey in a motion on Feb. 21, 1793 (Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 537ff).

123. Ibid., LX, 88-90.

124. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 274.





government to bring the Italian states, Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden into the war, as well as the effort to stop American trade with the French West Indies, earned his strong dis-  
<sup>125</sup>  
 approval.

From the first Fox and the liberal Whigs disliked the English alliances with Austria, Prussia and Russia. They not only disapproved of tying England to the powers who had dis-  
 sected Poland and whose declared intention was to change the  
 government of France,  
<sup>126</sup>  
 but they felt that if the English aims really were different, as the ministry claimed, England might  
<sup>127</sup>  
 be prevented from making peace once her demands were satisfied. This fear was heightened once the treaties of alliance were actually signed for, as Fox pointed out in May, 1794, only England was bound by treaty not to make a separate peace; the Emperor refused to accept such a binding clause and Prussia  
<sup>128</sup>  
 did not respect it. The alliances, Fox said, took the making  
<sup>129</sup>  
 of peace out of the hands of the English ministers. Fox had strong objections, too, to the demands of Prussia and the Emperor for subsidies and loans from England to enable them to  
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 continue the war. When the motion for the subsidy to Prussia appeared before the British parliament in the spring of 1794, Fox not only criticized the size of the subsidy but voiced his suspicions of the good intentions of Prussia and his fear that

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125. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 139-141, 271-274;

Russell, Memorials, III, 39, 58, 59.

126. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 86, 87, 100, 101, 147,  
 150.

127. Ibid., 87.

128. Ibid., 208.

129. Ibid., 151.

130. Ibid., 151, 209.





the other allies might follow suit in demands for money.<sup>131</sup>  
 Fox was justified in his misgivings, for Prussia not only remained an un-cooperative ally but soon negotiated a peace with France. The Austrians in 1795 followed the Prussian example in demanding an English loan. This demand Fox resisted even more strongly than he had opposed the Prussian subsidy, for he was not only doubly suspicious of the Emperor's intention of continuing the war in the light of the Prussian defection, but he doubted the ability of the Austrians to pay interest on the loan or to raise the specified number of troops.<sup>132</sup> If the money was advanced all at once as a loan, he said, the English could exert even less restraint upon the Emperor than they had had upon Prussia.<sup>133</sup> Fox thought that the money would be far better spent on English forces.<sup>134</sup>

Pitt was well aware of the weaknesses of the coalition with Austria and Prussia,<sup>135</sup> but he hoped that it would suffice until the French collapsed, as he believed they would.<sup>136</sup> While Fox warned that the war had produced both energy and unity within France and that there was little likelihood of an internal overthrow of the Jacobins,<sup>137</sup> Pitt failed to see how much the conflict had enhanced French nationalism. Indeed, Pitt's over-optimism<sup>138</sup>

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131. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 169ff.

132. Ibid., 242ff.

133. Ibid., 268.

134. Ibid., 249.

135. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 195.

136. Ibid., 196.

137. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 133, 214.

138. Rose, op. cit., 197.





led him not only to overlook the pressing needs of the European coalition for English domestic affairs in the spring of 1794<sup>139</sup> but to undertake the campaigns of 1793 and 1794 with-<sup>140</sup>out realizing the strength needed to crush the French. Furthermore, Pitt was drawn by a political aim -- the re-establishment of Austrian power in Belgium -- from the plan of a maritime and colonial war to a continental campaign.<sup>141</sup> This, combined with the plan to help the royalist uprising in France, led to a dissipation of resources that was bound to meet with ill-success and which was certainly open to the criticism it received at the hands of Fox.<sup>142</sup>

While Fox's criticism of the war policy of the ministry as well as his attempts to ascertain the aims of the war arose from his desire to end hostilities, he and the liberal Whigs also sought peace by direct methods -- through motions introduced in parliament. Fox's first major motion for peace was made, as we have seen, in June, 1793, less than five months after the war began. In supporting his action he declared that England was in a position to make an honourable and secure peace because both Holland and England were now safe from attack.<sup>143</sup> In parliament, of course, Fox's motion met with strong opposition. Pitt declared that peace at that time was impossible and evidently the rapid successes gained by the

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139. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 208.

140. Ibid., 211, 217.

141. Ibid., 139.

142. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 135ff, 232, 281.

143. Russell, Memorials, 111, 39; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 106-109.





allied forces in the first few months of the war had much  
 to do with his refusal to consider an attempt at negotiation.<sup>144</sup>  
 Fox was certain that the English public wanted peace and while  
 he no doubt held an exaggerated view of the public sentiment,  
 there was some foundation to his claim according to the cari-<sup>145</sup>  
 catures of the time. While a sermon on the glories of peace  
 at Brighton during the summer brought a near riot,<sup>146</sup> there was  
 certainly dissatisfaction over the conduct of the campaigns<sup>147</sup>  
 and some hopes that the war would be concluded soon. By the  
 beginning of 1794 the conduct of the war at least was arousing<sup>148</sup>  
 strong protests from the English public.

Fox and the liberal Whigs made several attempts to gain  
 parliamentary support for the cause of peace during 1794, but  
 with little success. Fox pointed out during the debate on the  
 throne speech in January that England had nothing to lose even  
 if peace negotiations failed, for the negotiations in them-  
 selves would demonstrate that England was fighting only a  
 defensive war and a just war. If the French realized this,<sup>149</sup>  
 their own enthusiasm for the war would be lessened. However,  
 Fox's amendment to the address, promising the necessary support  
 for the safety of the crown and nation but asking for peace at<sup>150</sup>  
 the earliest opportunity was defeated 277 - 49. Again in May,

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144. Parliamentary Debates, IX, 672-675.

145. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 112; Wright, Caricature History, 484.

146. Annual Register, 1793, 39 (Chron.).

147. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 153; H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 411.

148. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 162.

149. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 149.

150. Ibid., 143, 144.





1794, on a definite motion for peace, Fox voiced the belief that negotiations in themselves could do nothing but better the English cause,<sup>151</sup> but the motion was defeated by the usual<sup>152</sup> majority.

Fox was now even more convinced than he had been in 1793<sup>153</sup> that the English public was thoroughly tired of war. His belief was probably more sound than it had been the previous year, for such a staunch anti-Jacobin as the Marquis of Buckingham queried Lord Grenville during the summer of 1794 on the wisdom of continuing the war in view of the French successes on the Continent.<sup>154</sup> Evidently by autumn even the ministry was ready to investigate a supposed offer of negotiation from the French. However, the negotiations, which did not materialize, could have come to nothing if the terms mentioned by Grenville<sup>155</sup> and the king were those to be offered to the French. By the end of 1794 it was evident that the successes of French arms had brought a definite aversion to the war among the general<sup>156</sup> public in England.

This spirit manifested itself in parliament, too. The throne speech which opened the new session stated the necessity of continuing the war despite defeats and the defection of the Dutch, and, as we have seen, aroused the opposition not

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151. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 211.

152. Ibid., 218.

153. Russell, Memorials, III, 76.

154. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 598, 603.

155. Ibid., II, 638.

156. Annual Register, 1795, 146; Parliamentary Debates, LXV, 228, 363, 411.



only of Fox and his followers but of Wilberforce and others. The opposition vote on the reply to the speech from the throne rose to seventy-five.<sup>157</sup> The gain of twenty-odd supporters by the Foxite opposition showed that there was dissension among Pitt's followers over the continuation of the war with France. The desire for peace among the government supporters was probably more widespread than the change in the vote indicated. A month later, in January, 1795, on a motion for peace by Charles Grey, the opposition numbers rose to eighty-six. Pitt, seeking to conciliate this growing desire for peace, amended Grey's forthright motion to a pledge for a vigorous prosecution of the war and a negotiation with France when peace could be obtained with justice, honour and safety. This Wilberforce again amended to a form that was similar to, though slightly more moderate than,<sup>158</sup> the original. Fox noted that Pitt's motion no longer precluded negotiation with France on the basis of its type of government,<sup>159</sup> and indeed, Pitt might well have bent toward popular wishes, for on Wilberforce's amendment the opposition climbed to ninety,<sup>160</sup> the highest figure since the Whig split in 1792.

Despite Pitt's softening attitude, Fox noted in February, 1795, that the ministry had done nothing yet toward obtaining peace.<sup>161</sup> A month later Fox made a motion in parliament for a

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157. Parliamentary Debates, LXV, 70; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 232.

158. Ibid., 233; Parliamentary Debates, LXV, 314, 323, 324, 335, 336, 356.

159. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 235.

160. Ibid., 240; Parliamentary Debates, LXV, 356.

161. Russell, Memorials, III, 99.





consideration of the state of the nation. He spoke elo-  
quently of the necessity of an examination of the affairs  
of the country, for, he declared, there was great disatis-  
faction within England; the country had suffered tremendous  
losses in men and had accumulated an enormous debt; commer-  
cial interests had suffered heavily and the conduct of neither  
England nor her allies gave promise of military success. The  
opposition numbers, however, were down to sixty-three on the  
vote.<sup>162</sup> Fox was even more discouraged by the attitude of  
parliament and the public in the months that followed. The  
people, he said, were encouraged to believe that a better  
peace might be obtained by waiting. Despite the desire for  
peace, he noted that there was no real agitation for peace  
either in or out of parliament. This he found very dis-  
heartening.<sup>163</sup> Indeed so discouraged was Fox that by August  
he considered that only England, of all Europe, still wanted  
war.<sup>164</sup>

None the less by the autumn of 1795 the ministry was  
evidently moving toward an attempt, at least, at peace.  
This effort was probably the result of the break-up of the  
coalition (Prussia, Spain and the Netherlands had all signed  
treaties with France) and a change within France which set  
up a government based on a limited franchise, a two-house  
parliament and a directorate of five as an executive, giving

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162. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 252, 256, 259, 260, 264ff.

163. Ibid., 290.

164. Russell, Memorials, III, 107, 108, 111.

165. Ibid., 111, 120.



promise of a more stable system. English domestic affairs were also calling for peace. The shortage of grain and the ensuing high prices had brought such great discontent among the populace that the king was nearly mobbed amid shouts of "Bread" and "Peace" while on his way to open parliament in October.<sup>166</sup> The speech from the throne promised negotiations for peace should the new government of France prove stable.<sup>167</sup> In December, 1795, the king sent a message to parliament that as the French administration appeared to be firmly established the British administration was prepared to negotiate.<sup>168</sup> While Fox privately doubted the sincerity of the government's desire for peace,<sup>169</sup> he was delighted at the official change in attitude. One cannot really blame him for pointing out in parliament that the government's declaration exonerated the Foxites for their much-maligned attempt to gain a peace with the French republic, for the new French directorate contained four members who were regicides.<sup>170</sup>

Negotiations were so slow in starting that a motion for peace presented by Charles Grey in February, 1796, advocated an immediate direct contact with the French government. Fox claimed that the English government should abjure interference with the internal affairs of other nations

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166. Annual Register, 1795, 37, 38 (Chron.).

167. Parliamentary Debates, LXVIII, 2.

168. Ibid., LXVIII, 628.

169. Russell, Memorials, III, 127.

170. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 310, 311.





as a first step. He suggested that even if the French  
 directorate was insolent and extravagant in its wishes  
 the English should be conciliatory and should at least  
 offer terms.<sup>171</sup> However, Fox privately said that he  
 thought both governments were too hostile for there to  
 be much chance of success.<sup>172</sup> France was finally approached  
 by the British government in March, 1796, (a delay that Fox  
 later criticized).<sup>173</sup> The French demands were high -- the re-  
 tention of all territory incorporated in France by 1795 --  
 and English public opinion supported the ministry in its  
 refusal to give up the English colonial conquests if France  
 was to keep hers in Europe.<sup>174</sup> Even Fox, who had long thought  
 the colonial victories good bargaining material,<sup>175</sup> agreed  
 with the action of the British government.<sup>176</sup>

The English ministry, once decided upon negotiation,  
 was determined, and in the fall of 1796 another effort was  
 made to attain peace by sending Lord Malmesbury to Paris.  
 Fox was still doubtful of the chances of success<sup>177</sup> and there  
 were government members who were definitely opposed to the  
 move.<sup>178</sup> Fox's doubts were justified, for the mission was  
 rudely dismissed by the French in December. Fox noted pri-  
 vately that the directorate had been unreasonable,<sup>179</sup> but his

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171. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 326, 329, 331.  
 172. Russell, Memorials, III, 129.  
 173. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 351.  
 174. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 276, 277.  
 175. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 210.  
 176. Rose, op. cit., 275.  
 177. Russell, op. cit., III, 268.  
 178. Windham, Windham Papers, II, 19, 24, 27.  
 179. Russell, op. cit., III, 269.



speech in parliament showed that he still retained his old distrust of Pitt and felt that the British delegation had not only lacked good faith but had also lacked moderation in its demands.<sup>180</sup> The acidity of Fox's criticism was probably the result of the disappointment he felt over the failure to obtain peace, for he remarked that the nation was in a "hopeless state" in regard to the war.<sup>181</sup>

Fox probably felt this same hopelessness over the part he and his followers played in parliament. England was in real danger in 1797, for with the peace between Austria and France she faced Europe alone. Opposition to war must have been most distasteful under the circumstances, and that fact no doubt contributed to Fox's agreement to the proposed secession of the liberal Whigs from parliament in the spring of 1797.

Fox's attitude toward the war does merit criticism, for there is little doubt that he underestimated the danger to England from France. However, the stand taken by the Foxite Whigs did serve a useful purpose. Without some kind of parliamentary opposition the blunders of the ministers (and there were many) would have passed unheeded in a parliament which was giving Pitt what Fox considered to be "blind confidence". Fox was at his most astute in his criticism of Pitt's optimism over the internal collapse of France, and he was at his

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180. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 366-371.

181. Ibid., 361.



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liberal best in his attempts to have the ministry abjure interference in France's internal affairs. His reasoning in the latter at first seems sensible. If the government did not intend a war of conquest or principle, both the English allies and the French should have been aware of that fact. With such knowledge the French might show more moderation in their demands and aspirations, and the allies, knowing the English aims were limited and in view of their own financial difficulties, might moderate their own attitude. However, there was a basic fallacy in Fox's stand. Fox, and at first Pitt, may have considered the war to be one of defence but the majority of English opinion did not. From the first George III and many members of the British parliament and public considered the war to be one against French principles and aimed at interference in French internal politics. If Fox hoped to turn this majority to his way of thinking, his chances of success were slight. In view of this general attitude toward the war, the Foxites also had little hope of success in their introduction in parliament of motions for peace. But again these attempts served a purpose in that after 1794 they illustrated the growing desire in the country for peace.

While an element of party faction can be found in the  
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 actions of the Foxite Whigs between 1793 and 1797, the  
 sincerity of their opposition to the war cannot be questioned

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182. Actually this was as much personal as party feeling for the outstanding examples -- the Foxite suspicion of Pitt's motives in going to war, and in 1796, of his sincerity in his attempts at peace -- arose from the long-standing Whig distrust of Pitt himself.



seriously. If these men had been interested only in gaining power, they could have achieved that end with far greater ease by using the war as an excuse either to join the government or, more probably, to smooth over the disagreement with the conservative Whigs. The length of the struggle against the ministry and the war, against the endless defeats in parliament, and the constant suspicion and disapproval of the public say much for the integrity of Fox and his followers. Few people would have agreed with Lady Sarah Lennox that Charles Fox was more magnificent than ever and that he was quite right in his judgement of the war.<sup>183</sup> Most of the public agreed with Windham that the Foxite Whigs were possible traitors attempting to make the war unpopular in England in order to save the French government from overthrow and striving to institute that system of government in England.<sup>184</sup>

This belief was far from the truth, for Fox was genuinely disgusted with the French government and its actions.<sup>185</sup> With such an attitude toward France, Fox's opposition to England's participation in the war cannot have stemmed from anything but dislike of war itself. Fox disliked war of any kind and a war he considered to be unjust he abhorred. He strongly disapproved of external interference in the government of any nation, and a war that had this as its basis had no redeeming feature. Once England was at war, Fox's one concern was, as he declared

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183. Ilchester & Stavordale, Lady Sarah Lennox, II, 89, 95.

184. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 147, 148, 154, 318, 321; Wright, Caricature History, 482; Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 72, 73.

185. Ibid., 195; Russell, Memorials, III, 39, 58, 59.





in 1796, a peace in which "the interests of humanity as well as of kings, and that of every particular state will be consulted, and that tranquillity will be re-established on the broad basis of justice, in answer to the prayers of mankind, who are now fatigued with war, slaughter, and devastation."<sup>186</sup>

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186. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 334.



REFORM AND REPRESSION, 1793 - 1797

When, early in 1793, Charles Fox denounced a suspension of parliamentary opposition as the suspension of the most valuable<sup>1</sup> part of the British constitution, he was thinking not only of English politics in regard to the war with France, but also of English domestic affairs. Fox feared that such a course would prove dangerous to the political and personal liberties of the English for the parliamentary opposition guarded the consti-<sup>2</sup>tution from the executive power of the government. The fear that the power of the crown and hence that of the executive would disregard the rights of the people had always affected his political thinking and that fear played an even greater part in his actions between 1793 and 1797 than ever before. Many of the measures proposed by the ministry during these years were opposed by Fox on the basis that they increased the patronage and power of the government and his protests increased as the authoritarianism of the ministry grew with the diffi-<sup>3</sup>culties of England. Fox believed that parliament should take care to keep the respect of the people, and the best way to accomplish that was to show concern rather than disdain for their rights.<sup>4</sup> Fox declared that he was coming to value poli-<sup>5</sup>tical liberty more and more and the actions of all the European nations including England, which he considered to pay

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1. See Chapter XI, p. 189.

2. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 167.

3. Parliamentary Debates, IX, 334; LXII, 361, 365, 395, 419, 420, 691.

4. Ibid., LX, 352.

5. Russell, Memorials, III, 43.



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... (The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to the quality of the scan. It appears to be a multi-paragraph document discussing various topics, possibly related to the CIA's activities in the early 1970s.)

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little attention to civil liberty, disheartened him.

There was cause for Fox to be concerned over the prevailing attitude within England. After the execution of the French king in January, 1793, Lord Holland wrote that the prejudices of the English public were such that no one could express an opinion on politics without having first declared his dislike of the French Convention.<sup>7</sup> About the same time, Lady Sarah Lennox noted the confusion of "prejudices, frights, & [sic] abuse".<sup>8</sup> Although Lady Sarah considered that Fox, through his stand on the war and on reform, had lost any chance of becoming a minister but had gained as an "honest man",<sup>9</sup> her opinion unfortunately was not shared by the general public which now viewed the parliamentary opposition with the same suspicion it had of the French Jacobins.<sup>10</sup> This attitude found expression in parliament in the anti-liberal sentiments of the majority during the spring months of 1793 which, according to the Annual Register, were spent in passing laws for the protection of the country from internal and external dangers.<sup>11</sup> Actually, the period saw the growth of sentiments and legislation which was to culminate in the "English Reign of Fear"—an echo of the "Reign of Terror" in neighboring France.

Parliament's increasing dislike of any liberal measure was illustrated by the failure of Wilberforce to obtain a recon-

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6. Russell, Memorials, III, 39, 58, 59.

7. Butler, Reform Bill, 18.

8. Ilchester & Stavordale, Lady Sarah Lennox, II, 89.

9. Ibid., II, 89.

10. Wright, Caricature History, 482; Fox; French Revolution Speeches, 72, 73.

11. Annual Register, 1793, 97.



sideration of the abolition of the slave trade. While a measure for gradual abolition previously had passed the Commons, the bill had been stopped in the Lords and the renewed efforts of Wilberforce in the spring of 1793 met with fresh rebuffs<sup>12</sup> in the lower house. The sentiments of parliament were shown, too, in March, 1793, when Sheridan attempted to have a parliamentary committee investigate the truth of the constant claims of seditious activities in England. The debates on his motion certainly showed the alarm and fear with which liberal sentiments were regarded.<sup>13</sup> Fear of "French" principles certainly played a part in the passing of the Traitorous Correspondence Bill in the latter part of the same month. This measure prohibited the sale of arms or provisions to the enemy, forbade any activities which might improve the financial position of France and instituted a system of passports for English citizens returning from France. Fox protested, with some justice, that the law was unnecessary and he was highly suspicious of the haste with which the measure was pushed through parliament.<sup>14</sup>

However, the most far-reaching blow to English liberalism was the defeat in May, 1793, of Grey's motion for a committee to consider the reform of parliament.<sup>15</sup> The defeat showed that most members now viewed any move toward reform with suspicion,<sup>16</sup> and also that any attempt to get a reformed system of representation through parliament was hopeless. The radical re-

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12. Parliamentary Debates, LIX, 621; LX, 539-541; Annual Register, 1793, 85, 88, 89.

13. Ibid., 1793, 91, 100; Parliamentary Debates, LX, 2ff, 23, 25, 29, 30.

14. Ibid., LX, 73-77, 94, 99, 109, 119.

15. See Chapter X, p. 166.

16. Parliamentary Debates, LX, 346, 386, 399, 400, 414, 441-447





formers, many of whom had never had much faith in petitions to parliament and measures within parliament for reform, were now thrown back upon their own resources.

There was a close connection between the repressive measures of the English government during and after 1793 and the actions of the reformers which had caused and followed those measures. The refusal of parliament to consider the question of reform drove the reform societies to a consideration of other methods for achieving their objects; these in turn brought further repressive measures from the government. While parliament's opposition to reform, voiced in the proclamation against seditious writings in 1792, in the passing of the Treasonable Correspondence Bill and by the defeat of the reform motion in parliament in the spring of 1793, caused a further falling off in the membership of the reform organizations, the hardier and more inflammatory reformers remained.<sup>17</sup> Nor did the societies admit discouragement. The Friends of the People declared that they would continue to agitate for reform through declarations and petitions.<sup>18</sup> The Corresponding Society announced, rather ominously, that it would adopt firmer measures and then proceeded to hold two large meetings.<sup>19</sup>

This continued agitation of the reform associations was not the only reason for the growing alarm of the government and the British public over the danger of civil strife during 1793. There actually were numerous riots throughout England

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17. Brown, French Revolution in England, 100, 101.

18. Annual Register, 1793, 98, 99. (Append. to Chron.).

19. Brown, op. cit., 103.



in the course of the year. A large one disturbed Falmouth<sup>20</sup> in May over the price of corn and flour and another serious one took place in Bristol in September over the charges on a toll gate<sup>21</sup> and in the latter case at least some people evidently suspected that the riot had been French inspired.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, conservative-minded people had a great suspicion of the loyalty of the lower classes and a desire to see that the leading agitators and the prominent radical newspapers felt<sup>23</sup> the weight of the law.

Actually, the alarm of the government over these signs of disaffection during the spring of 1793 did show itself in the courts. The law had already touched many of the radical reformers but, outside of Thomas Paine who was tried in the fall of 1792, the arrests had been only of the "small fry". These continued throughout 1793. Printers charged with publishing the works of Paine or literature considered libelous<sup>24</sup> were brought to court. Others, such as the minister William Winterbottam, were brought to trial on a charge of uttering<sup>25</sup> seditious sentiments. Even those who forgot discretion in the ale houses were apt to end in the dock. Two such men were<sup>26</sup> arrested for toasting the French republic; another was arrested after he declared in a coffee house, "I am for equality... I would have no king, and the constitution of this country is

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20. Annual Register, 1793, 21 (Chron.).

21. Ibid., 1793, 45, 46 (Chron.).

22. Toynbee, Walpole Letters, XV, 213, 214.

23. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 454, 455; H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 222.

24. Annual Register, 1793, 22, 53 (Chron.).

25. Ibid., 1793, 54 (Chron.).

26. Ibid., 1793, 47 (Chron.).





a bad one." <sup>27</sup> There were better grounds than usual for a government prosecution in the latter case, for the offender, a reformer named Frost, had been presented at the bar of the <sup>28</sup> French Convention in November, 1792.

In addition, 1793 also brought the first of a series of trials of major figures in the reform movement. Early in the year two leading Scottish agitators, Muir and Palmer were arrested. Their trials before the notorious Lord Braxfield in Edinburgh during the summer brought them sentences of <sup>29</sup> transportation - fourteen years for Muir and seven for Palmer. The severity of the sentences, the obvious prejudice of the judges, the prosecution and the jury, who were all inspired <sup>30</sup> with fear and hatred of France as well as by class panic, brought strong protests from any in Britain who still retained liberal ideas.

Fox declared these prosecutions to be intolerable and noted despondently that "The very name of Liberty is scarce popular." <sup>31</sup> Toward the end of 1793 he wrote that "we imitate the French... and in the trials and sentences of Muir and Palmer... I do not think we fall very short of our original." <sup>32</sup> He was indignant to hear that these proceedings were to be defended in parliament and the sentences carried out, while sedition, which he considered to be the most vague of all charges, was to be

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27. Annual Register, 1793, 25 (Chron.).

28. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 172; Annual Register, 1792, 74 (Chron.).

29. Brown, French Revolution in England, 95, 96.

30. Ibid., 97, 99; Annual Register, 1794, 8, 9.

31. Russell, Memorials, III, 51.

32. Ibid., III, 60.



punished in Scotland as a felony. Fox was horrified at the idea that a man could be sent to Botany Bay for such "crimes" as advising another to read Paine's book.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, since he considered that there was no pretense left for calling Scotland a free country and very little for England,<sup>34</sup> he was seriously concerned over the increasing power of the crown.<sup>35</sup>

Fox grew even more indignant when the trials of Muir and Palmer were discussed in parliament in March of 1794. Robert Dundas, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, declared that the Scottish law on which the sentences were based was superior to the English. Windham voiced the belief that if English law was not equal to its purpose, the Scottish should be substituted and Pitt himself defended the sentences and even the hostile jury.<sup>36</sup> Such sentiments brought Fox to his feet in a full fury of indignation. If Scottish laws were introduced into England,<sup>37</sup> he declared bluntly, it would be time to leave the country. While Fox did not attack the actual arrest of either Muir or Palmer, he did question the legality of the sentences passed and the conduct of the trials themselves,<sup>38</sup> The judges (one of whom had evidently declared that the rabble had no rights) he flayed, and in comparison, he said, the English justices were models of humanity.<sup>39</sup> Fox's appeal was a

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33. Russell, Memorials, III, 61.

34. Ibid., III, 264.

35. Ibid., III, 62.

36. Ibid., III, 70; Parliamentary Debates, LXII, 525, 533, 542-545; The Modern Orator, II, 519.

37. Ibid., II, 520.

38. Ibid., II, 523, 524.

39. Ibid., II, 526, 527.



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demand for justice and humanity, but from the first he had not been hopeful of obtaining redress,<sup>40</sup> and after the discussion in parliament he noted that liberal wishes and complaints of oppression were generally ignored. The country was divided, he said, between the majority who were subdued by fear or corrupted by hope, and the minority waiting for the opportunity to use a violent remedy.<sup>41</sup>

While Fox was disheartened by the ineffectiveness of parliamentary opposition to repression, the radical reformers were not deterred by the examples made of Muir and Palmer. The association members in Edinburgh were still reported to be numerous and in the late fall of 1793 a second convention was held there.<sup>42</sup> Evidently French procedures were used by the meeting in which plans were made for another convention to be called in the event of the suspension of Habeas Corpus, the admission of foreign troops to England or in the event of an invasion. The convention was broken up by the authorities with the arrest of its leaders including the three English delegates, Skirving, Margarot and Gerrald. These men, too, were brought before Lord Braxfield and early in 1794 were sentenced to transportation after trials in which Braxfield<sup>43</sup> expounded the theory of unintentional sedition.

By the spring of 1794 the government's repressive measures were having a real effect upon the reform movement. The Birmingham and Manchester societies were dead and the Friends of

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40. Russell, Memorials, III, 61.

41. Ibid., III, 70.

42. Annual Register, 1793, 189.

43. Brown, French Revolution in England, 105-107.



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the People was slowly dying. The remaining reformers were drawing closer together. In April the Corresponding Society held another open-air public meeting and passed a series of strong resolutions which declared that any attempt by the government to violate the remaining laws of freedom would dissolve the social compact between the governors and the people.<sup>45</sup> In May, the Constitutional Society held a dinner meeting which was attended by several members of parliament and also by members of the Corresponding Society.<sup>46</sup> The government saw with alarm the closer ties growing up among the remaining reformers and this fact, combined with reports of arming,<sup>47</sup> determined the ministry to strike.

Pitt had already acted as an alarmist over the trials of the Scottish reformers<sup>48</sup> and to quell the agitation in both England and Scotland he now relied more and more upon repression. The numbers of the discontented in England were comparatively small and at the beginning of 1794 the majority of the British public was as loyal to the existing constitution and the government as it was suspicious of liberal and republican sympathizers whom it considered to be motivated solely by the desire for a complete change in the English Constitution.<sup>49</sup> The animosity between the supporters of the existing government and the democrats who wished for peace and the acknowledgement

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44. Brown, French Revolution in England, 111.

45. Ibid., 114.

46. Ibid., 115.

47. Ibid., 116, 117.

48. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 180.

49. Annual Register, 1794, 179.





of the French republic was far greater than the antagonism  
 within England during the American War.<sup>50</sup> There was not a  
 community where anyone with democratic principles could move  
 about without some evidence of public hatred.<sup>51</sup> There was a  
 great deal of uneasiness over the course of the war<sup>52</sup> and there  
 was evidently some fear of a French invasion,<sup>53</sup> so that Pitt  
 had general support in the course he took against those  
 holding "French" principles.

The government attack was two-pronged - both judicial and  
 legislative. On May 13, 1794, George III recommended that the  
 House of Commons take steps to deal with the seditious prac-  
 tices of the reform societies who planned a "General Convention"  
 in defiance of parliament. Orders had already been given for  
 the seizing of the papers of the societies and these were laid  
 before the house.<sup>54</sup> The solution of the ministry to the king's  
 request was a parliamentary secret committee to study the  
 papers which Pitt termed "formidable" and "criminal".<sup>55</sup> Dundas  
 assured Charles Fox that the seizure of the papers had been  
 legal for the action had been based on the treasonable prac-  
 tices of the groups concerned.<sup>56</sup> Pitt, who certainly exaggerated  
 the evidence of danger in the papers,<sup>57</sup> was probably aided by  
 Dundas and Windham in convincing the committee that there was  
 a conspiracy to overturn the British government.<sup>58</sup> Certainly

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50. Annual Register, 1794, 179, 180.

51. Brown, French Revolution in England, 107, 108.

52. Annual Register, 1794, 218.

53. H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 229.

54. Parliamentary Debates, LXIII, 237.

55. Ibid., LXIII, 240.

56. Ibid., LXIII, 244.

57. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 191.

58. Brown, op. cit., 118.



the committee reported in that vein to parliament on May 16th. Pitt cited as evidence of treasonable practices the resolutions at Edinburgh in 1793 and at the public meeting of the Corresponding Society the following April which supported a reform convention, and the long-standing contact with the French Jacobins as well as reports of the arming of English reformers. On these grounds he asked leave to bring in a bill enabling the government to detain persons suspected of treason. This would amount to a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. <sup>59</sup> Permission was granted by parliament and the measure went through the first and second readings that same day and was finally <sup>60</sup> passed the following day. The debate was a violent one and the opposition, though small, was active.

Charles Fox was not convinced by Pitt's evidence. The facts the minister had cited, Fox said, were not new; they had been known for a long time and he did not agree with the inference which the government had drawn from them. In the first place, he said, the Edinburgh Convention had not opposed the power of the government but had sought a redress of grievances. There was bound to be discontent as a result of the war and the Scottish trials, declared Fox, but the numbers of discontented were not large and the constitution had <sup>61</sup> far too many supporters for the discontented to be dangerous.

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59. Parliamentary Debates, LXIII, 245-253.

60. Ibid., LXIII, 271, 283, 326.

61. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 184-186. The Annual Register supports this contention (Annual Register, 1794 179).



The Committee on the Administration of the Government  
has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the letter  
of the 10th inst. in relation to the proposed  
amendment to the Constitution of the State of New York  
relating to the office of the Governor and the  
Lieutenant Governor. The Committee has the honor  
to inform you that the same has been referred to the  
proper authorities for their consideration and  
report. The Committee has the honor to inform you  
that the same has been referred to the proper  
authorities for their consideration and report.

Very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
J. B. Thompson, Secretary

The suspension of Habeas Corpus was far more mischievous than the measures advocated by the reformers, Fox declared, for such a suspension gave the executive absolute power over the personal liberty of every individual; every man who opposed the war was at the mercy of the ministers. In Fox's opinion, the proposal would temporarily destroy the best part of the constitution. Fox also made further strenuous objections to the ministry's evident haste to get the measure approved.<sup>62</sup>

Windham was just as vehement in his support of the government and the measure. He asserted that it was "puerile to impute to them the [reformers] innocent intentions."<sup>63</sup> There was a conspiracy to overturn the constitution, he declared, and if the suspension of Habeas Corpus was not sufficient to stem the tide, the government should bring in more severe measures.<sup>64</sup>

If Fox had needed any prodding, Windham, as the voice of the English reactionaries, was all that was necessary. The country, Fox warned, was heading for anarchy or Hume's "euthanasia of the British constitution"<sup>65</sup> - in either case an extinction of liberty. How far would and could Windham go, he asked? To the lengths of an anti-revolutionary tribunal like the revolutionary tribunal of France? Indeed,

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62. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 187, 188.

63. Parliamentary Debates, LXIII, 304.

64. Ibid., LXIII, 304.

65. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 190.

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been  
admitted to the office of the Secretary of the Board of Education  
since the last report of the Board of Education was published.  
The names are given in alphabetical order of the surnames.  
The names of the persons who have been admitted to the office of the  
Secretary of the Board of Education since the last report of the Board  
of Education was published are given in alphabetical order of the  
surnames.

Mr. J. H. Smith	1887
Mr. J. H. Smith	1887
Mr. J. H. Smith	1887
Mr. J. H. Smith	1887
Mr. J. H. Smith	1887

said Fox, the English government was becoming as bad as that of France in raising alarms in order to increase its own power.<sup>66</sup> As far as he was concerned, the English government had already enough power to suppress any real danger and the proposed measure was to be used to prevent the people from a rational consideration of the war. Fox defended those who approved of universal suffrage. He considered it impractical, but far from being the cause of the destruction of France it was only an effect. Were all liberal men to be considered traitors because liberty had been abused in France, he queried?<sup>67</sup> Liberty was the essence of the British constitution; was that constitution only good in peace and must repressive measures be adopted during war?<sup>68</sup> He personally would not answer long for the conduct of parliament if that body was not subject to the restraint of the people. As far as Fox was concerned, the suspension of Habeas Corpus would be "fatal to the established order and strength and freedom of the country."<sup>69</sup> Despite the struggle and the warnings of the opposition, the bill passed easily.

The government's seizure of the papers of the Corresponding and the Constitutional Societies had been accompanied by the arrest of thirteen members of the two associations, including such prominent reformers as Hardy, Horne Tooke and Thelwell.<sup>70</sup>

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66. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 190.192.

67. Ibid., 193-195

68. Ibid., 196, 197.

69. Ibid., 199, 202.

70. Brown, French Revolution in England, 119.





The arrests, combined with the suspension of Habeas Corpus, caused great concern among the Foxite Whigs for the liberties of England and for the safety of any who were not supporters of the government. Fox declared that the ministry had made good his parallel of it with the French Jacobins. An execution of any of the arrested reformers would be considered a corroboration of a conspiracy and as an excuse for more extraordinary government power. Yet if the prosecution failed, as he expected it would, then there was a possibility that the imaginary danger might become a real one. <sup>71</sup> Gray was convinced that if Hardy was convicted of treason his own turn would not <sup>72</sup> be long in coming.

The series of trials were begun with that of Hardy in late October, 1794. The prosecution opened with a nine-hour speech after which Lord Thurlow was reported to remark, "Nine hours, then there is no treason, by God!" <sup>73</sup> Evidently there was little creditable evidence against Hardy, especially as the proceedings of the reform societies had always been well publicized. <sup>74</sup> After nine days the jury brought in a verdict of "not guilty" <sup>75</sup> As the trials of Horne Tooke, Thelwell and the others had rested upon the conviction of Hardy, these reformers, too, were <sup>76</sup> either acquitted or simply dismissed.

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71. Russell, Memorials, III, 77.

72. Brown, French Revolution in England, 127; Lascelles, Fox, 264.

73. Brown, op. cit., 127.

74. Annual Register, 1794, 279.

75. Ibid., 1794, 36 (Chron.). 279.

76. Ibid., 1794, 39, 41 (Chron.); Brown, op. cit., 128, 129.



Hardy's restrained comment, "Fellow countrymen, I thank  
 you,"<sup>77</sup> was echoed by the country. Fox thought it fortunate  
 that criminal justice was not quite in the hands of the  
 crown.<sup>78</sup> The public, on the whole, viewed the acquittals with  
 unrestrained satisfaction.<sup>79</sup> However, later debates in parlia-  
 ment showed that there were many members who considered the  
 acquitted reformers to be anything but innocent.<sup>80</sup>

Fox had not been the only one who feared that an acquittal  
 might bring a real danger of conspiracy to England.<sup>81</sup> However,  
 the report of the Annual Register claimed that the trials  
 showed there was not as much to fear from the societies as  
 had been thought previously,<sup>82</sup> and, indeed, the events of 1794  
 severely damaged the reform movement. The Constitutional  
 Society never met again and the Friends of the People soon  
 faded from sight. Only the Corresponding Society showed any  
 activity and it not only lost several hundred members but its  
 officials were arrested as soon as they were elected.<sup>83</sup>

Was Fox justified in his opposition to the government's  
 action? The aim of the reformers was the agitation of public  
 opinion, and the Corresponding Society did favor a convention  
 to concentrate reform enthusiasm and to gain attention.<sup>84</sup>  
 Generally speaking, the leaders of the society were not ad-  
 vocates of violence.<sup>85</sup> The attitudes of a few reformers war-  
 ranted suspicion<sup>86</sup> but there was only one clear instance of

77. Annual Register, 1794, 36 (Chron.).

78. Russell, Memorials, III, 95.

79. Annual Register, 1794, 279.

80. See p. 223, 224.

81. H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 254.

82. Annual Register, 1794, 280.

83. Brown, French Revolution in England, 150.

84. Ibid., 134, 315.

85. Ibid., 135-141.

86. Ibid., 142-145.





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arming. However, the rumours of arming and the favor with which both the Corresponding Society and the Constitutional Society looked upon a plan for a convention alarmed Pitt.<sup>88</sup> Not only did he exaggerate the evidence of danger<sup>89</sup> and present the activities of the reformers in the worst possible light<sup>90</sup> but his attitude during the questioning of the arrested members of the reform societies<sup>91</sup> supports the idea that he was determined to get convictions. Indeed this claim is further supported by Pitt's attitude toward the trial of Thomas Walker of Manchester in April, 1794, a short time before the arrest of Hardy. Walker, the founder of the Manchester society and a moderate reformer, found himself in court through charges of conspiracy trumped-up by his personal enemies. The government was aware that the evidence against him was poor and the witnesses not of a creditable type, yet the trial was allowed to take place. Fortunately,<sup>92</sup> Walker was acquitted. The acquittal of the reformers in the fall of 1794 showed that Pitt was not justified in the suspension of Habeas Corpus. One of his biographers admits this but defends Pitt on the basis that the reformers' plan for a national convention might have brought about a dangerous situation.<sup>93</sup> This defence seems to be inadequate. While there was a measure of discontent in England its size did not

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87. Brown, French Revolution in England, 145, 146.

88. Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 187, 188.

89. Ibid., 191.

90. Parliamentary Debates, LXIII, 246-253.

91. Brown, op. cit., 121, 122.

92. Ibid., 124.

93. Rose, op. cit., 193.



approach that in France at the time of the French Revolution. The majority of the English were loyal to the king and to the existing government.<sup>94</sup>

The suspicion and fear that brought the arrests of Hardy and his fellow reformers had a further profound effect upon the English political scene. In July, 1794, the Duke of Portland finally consented to a coalition with Pitt. Portland became Home Secretary; Windham, Secretary at War; Spencer, Lord Privy Seal and late in the fall Fitzwilliam was named Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.<sup>95</sup> Only six months previously Portland had expressed strong disapproval of such a move as he considered the preservation of the Whig party essential to the political structure of English government, and like Fox, he suspected Pitt of attempting to make the differences within the Whig party permanent.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, Burke, who worked unceasingly toward a coalition, believed that in a matter of months after its formation the conservative Whigs would be as much Pitt's party as the Tories.<sup>97</sup> Despite a near-break over the question of the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, this proved to be the case. While the coalition gained the approval of Whigs such as Tom Grenville, Tories such as the Marquis of Buckingham declared the new coalition to be one resembling that of Fox and North and believed that Pitt would lose many friends over the Portland Whigs' accession to the government.<sup>99</sup>

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94. Annual Register, 1794, 179.

95. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 217.

96. Ibid., I, 201-207

97. Ibid., I, 266.

98. H.M.C., Fortescue Papers, II, 597.

99. Ibid., II, 597, 598.





Certainly Fox was disheartened by the change. He had been gloomy enough over the state of politics at the beginning of 1794<sup>100</sup> and became more discouraged as the months passed and he noted the growing reaction of the conservative Whigs.<sup>101</sup> In April, 1794, Fox told his nephew, Lord Holland, that he was thoroughly tired of politics which he felt were becoming worse and worse but through duty, he must continue.<sup>102</sup> When the coalition between the Portland Whigs and the ministry actually took place Fox evidently felt the loss of his friends deeply (despite the fact that they had not acted together for a year and a half) for Lady Sarah Lennox noted that Fox strongly retained ancient affections.<sup>103</sup> Fox himself admitted that the coalition brought him near despair from personal rather than political reasons for he had not believed that his friends would so "disgrace" themselves. Again he declared that only a sense of duty prevented him from retiring.<sup>104</sup> Politically he felt that the action of the conservative Whigs had given a deadly blow to public confidence in public men,<sup>105</sup> and he disparaged the union for the effect it had on the party system of government which, despite its imperfections, he still believed to be the best system to support the cause of liberty. The party system alone had prevented Britain from falling into Hume's "euthanasia" of absolute monarchy, he claimed, and therefore such a system must be revived and might be through the small group he led. Fox thought that the party

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100. Russell, Memorials, III, 58, 59.

101. Ibid., III, 70.

102. Ibid., III, 71.

103. Ilchester & Stavordale, Lady Sarah Lennox, II, 116, 161.

104. Russell, op. cit., III, 79, 80.

105. Parliamentary Debates, LXV, 162.



system of government was the only substitute for the ideal public virtue and the only method of controlling the power of the crown or of protecting the people from a parliament corrupted by the crown.<sup>106</sup> However, Fox confessed that, with a government which controlled an empire and collected a large revenue, he did not believe that the influence of the crown through patronage could be done away with except under a complete change in the form of government.<sup>107</sup>

Despite the blow that the Portland-Pitt coalition dealt to the English party system and despite his realization of the shortcomings of that system, Fox retained his faith in the remnants of party opposition which he and his followers gave to parliament. Indeed, at the end of 1794 he expressed his hopes that the Foxite Whigs might gain additional followers before too long.<sup>108</sup> He was to need that optimism during 1795 for by the end of the year the cause of reform and liberalism was dead except for his small group in parliament.

The new session of parliament opened at the end of December, 1794, and the small opposition, with renewed courage and a new weapon drawn from the acquittal of the reformers, returned to the defence of English liberalism. An old custom to assert the independence of parliament provided that a routine bill be passed before the house heard the message from the king. On this occasion Sheridan upset the routine by proposing (quite

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106. Russell, Memorials, III, 88-91

107. Ibid., III, 94.

108. Ibid., III, 98.





legally) that the house discuss the suspension of Habeas Corpus. The debate was an interesting one for one side contended that the acquittal of the reformers had shown that there was no conspiracy to overthrow the government and hence the suspension of Habeas Corpus was no longer necessary, while the other maintained that no such inference could be drawn from the trials. The Solicitor-General declared that the only result of the acquittals was that the ex-prisoners could never again be tried on the same charge and that there was no proof that the reformers were not morally guilty. <sup>110</sup> Pitt spoke in much the same vein, claiming that there were substantial grounds for considering the reformers morally guilty and that a dangerous tendency had actually been proved. The government, he said, had been justified in their charges and the suspension of Habeas Corpus <sup>111</sup> was still necessary. As far as Fox was concerned the government was accusing men who had been proved innocent and he accused the Attorney-General of supporting the doctrine of "constructive treason". As for the Solicitor-General, he might be convinced that there was a plot to overthrow the government but he had failed to convince a jury and Fox doubted whether he <sup>112</sup> could convince him.

Sheridan did not get far with his motion on Habeas Corpus but the question of the guilt of the acquitted reformers continued to be discussed during the debates in parliament. During

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109. Parliamentary Debates, LXV, 2.

110. Ibid., LXV, 4, 5.

111. Ibid., LXV, 11, 12.

112. Ibid., LXV, 7.

The first of these is the fact that the  
 government has been unable to secure  
 the necessary funds to carry out its  
 policy of non-interference in the  
 internal affairs of the country.  
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 internal affairs of the country.

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the discussion on the speech from the throne, Windham showed his opinion when he likened the leading reformers to "acquitted felons",<sup>113</sup> and the matter formed an important part of the debates when Sheridan and Fox again attempted to have the suspension of Habeas Corpus repealed early in January, 1795. The ministers must prove the suspension was not only justified but was also serving a good purpose, declared Fox. The old object of suspending Habeas Corpus was gone, he said, for the persons considered to be the principals in the alleged conspiracy had been acquitted. Furthermore, the ministry had ceased prosecuting the reformers because they knew they could not obtain convictions. Therefore they had virtually acquitted everyone in the country.<sup>114</sup> Fox again accused the ministry of purposely exciting alarm and warned that "real dangers make no impression when compared with the phantoms of a distempered imagination."<sup>115</sup> Fox in defending the reformers pointed out that he personally would agree with many of their plans; he would agree to a general meeting to prevent unconstitutional measures and he, too, would resist tyranny by force. The ministers were the ones making the most dreadful innovations with the constitution, declared Fox.<sup>116</sup>

While the liberal Whigs had a solid basis for their argument, their attempt failed and, at the end of January, 1795, parliament renewed the suspension of Habeas Corpus. During the debate the Solicitor-General claimed that the suspension of

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113. Parliamentary Debates, LXV, 39.

114. Ibid., LXV, 155-160.

115. Ibid., LXV, 162.

116. Ibid., LXV, 163, 164.





Habeas Corpus was not a dangerous measure.<sup>117</sup> Fox was indignant. You could not have a conspiracy without conspirators, he declared. To use the prevention of treason as the reason for such a measure was to desert the principles of ancestors for the policy of the Bastille, he cried. Only when government<sup>118</sup> was perfect, Fox declared, would there be no discontent,<sup>118</sup> but there were few in parliament who agreed with him.

It was evident during the spring of 1795 that Fox was very discouraged over the political situation in England. To him,<sup>119</sup> the spirit of liberty in the country seemed to be disappearing. He wished more strongly than ever that he could leave public life but he still felt that he had a duty to perform. He considered that secession from parliament was the measure of a "shabby fellow", although he admitted that his opinion might be changed<sup>120</sup> by the course of events.

Despite Fox's discouragement over the lack of the liberal spirit in the country, unrest among the people grew during 1795 and finally exploded in the fall of the year. Fox had noted in March, when he proposed that parliament consider the state of the nation, that there was discontent over the war and the commercial situation.<sup>121</sup> Riots broke out for various reasons during the summer and a late harvest combined with high prices and unemployment added to the general discontent.<sup>122</sup> The climax came on

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117. Parliamentary Debates, LXV, 274.

118. Ibid., LXV, 289, 291.

119. Russell, Memorials, III, 105, 107.

120. Ibid., III, 105, 106.

121. Fox: French Revolution Speeches, 252, 259, 260.

122. Russell, op. cit., III, 116; Annual Register, 1795, 25, 29 (Chron.); 1796, 5, 6, 7, 9.



the opening of parliament at the end of October. The king was mobbed and the windows of his coach broken by an excited crowd shouting for bread and peace as he was on his way to open the session.<sup>123</sup> While the attack brought renewed protests of loyalty to the sovereign,<sup>124</sup> when combined with the recent activities of the reformers it was to have serious consequences.

A few days before the opening of parliament, the Corresponding Society held a huge open-air meeting at Copenhagen Fields outside London. The crowd was orderly but the language of the meeting was strong and a remonstrance to the king on the calamitous state of the country was voted.<sup>125</sup> The meeting, the attack on the king a few days later as well as the fact that one of the leaders of the attack was a member of the Corresponding Society,<sup>126</sup> thoroughly alarmed the government and also gave them an unassailable hold on their parliamentary followers for the new legislation they proposed. The battle over this legislation during November and early December of 1795 was the climax of the conflict that had raged between the forces of reform and those of repression since the outbreak of the French Revolution.

On November 9, 1795, Pitt asked leave of the House of Commons to bring in a bill prohibiting seditious meetings. The alarming nature of the recent attack on the king, he said, constituted a defiance of the constitution. Such a spirit

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123. Annual Register, 1795, 37, 38 (Chron.).

124. Ibid., 1795, 39 (Chron.).

125. Ibid., 1795, 37 (Chron.); Brown, French Revolution in England, 152.

126. Ibid., 152.





must be repressed and could be, he declared, by preventing meetings which excited disloyalty. Accordingly, he proposed that all public meetings be obliged to obtain licenses from the local magistrate. The magistrates would be empowered to disperse even licensed meetings which were spreading seditious opinion or abusing the right of petition. Any resistance to the magistrate would constitute a felony.<sup>127</sup> The measure, known as the Seditious Meetings Bill, was accompanied by the introduction at the same time in the Lords of the Treasonable Practices Bill which was designed to protect the person of the king and included provisions forbidding treasonable publications and discourses.<sup>128</sup> Both measures raised an unprecedented storm of protest but the strongest objections in the Commons were against the measure first introduced there - the bill against seditious meetings. So strong was the feeling that a few of Pitt's supporters deserted him, and even among those who remained within the fold there was some misgiving over the severity of the legislation.<sup>129</sup> The lead in the parliamentary opposition came, of course, from the Foxite Whigs. Fox declared indignantly that the bill was unnecessary. If speakers such as those at the recent meeting of the Corresponding Society were considered to have seditious designs, they could be prosecuted under existing laws, he said. Fox declared that the people had a right to discuss their grievances and the proposed regulations would not only prevent all political discussion but were also sheer madness for they instigated the despotism that brings revolution.<sup>130</sup>

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127. Parliamentary Debates, LXVIII, 111-114.

128. Annual Register, 1796, 17, 18.

129. Parliamentary Debates, LXVIII, 120, 122-125.

130. The Modern Orator, II, 569-572.



If, said Fox, "you take away all legal means of obtaining that object, [the redress of grievances]...you then leave no alternative but force and violence."<sup>131</sup>

The opposition in parliament, while still small in numbers,<sup>132</sup> was remarkably active and for the first time in many years, Fox had solid backing outside the house. The proposed government measures brought the Whigs and radicals together again. Erskine presided at a large protest meeting in Edinburgh and the Whigs and reformers combined for a huge demonstration at Copenhagen Fields where a monster petition was signed by thousands.<sup>133</sup> The meetings and petitions had the full approval of Fox, who declared that the Whigs must brave the "calumny" that would be theirs for associating with the Corresponding Society. He was certain that the government was intent on establishing absolutism and the only possible course for the opposition was to rouse the people to act by any means other than outright force.<sup>134</sup> Fox himself called a meeting of the Westminster electors to consider the two bills and as a result a petition against the measures was agreed upon by all but two voters.<sup>135</sup> Similar assemblies were held throughout the country and the petitions against the bills poured into parliament during the latter part of November.<sup>136</sup>

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131. The Modern Orator, II, 573.

132. Parliamentary Debates, LXVIII, *passim*; Annual Register, 1796, 16ff.

133. Ibid., 1795, 43 (Chron.); Brown, French Revolution in England, 152.

134. Russell, Memorials, III, 124, 125.

135. Ibid., III, 126; Annual Register, 1795, 43, 44 (Chron.).

136. Ibid., 1796, 39, 40; Parliamentary Debates, LXVIII, 271, 281, 283, 285.





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Parliament also received petitions favoring the bills but the majority supported the stand of the opposition.<sup>138</sup> However, it was in parliament that the decision was to be made, and within parliament the government and its supporters stood firm.

Strong measures were necessary to preserve the constitution,<sup>139</sup> one government supporter declared. Windham claimed that the Whigs opposed the bills because that group had been so long and so closely connected with those whom the measures would affect most and he defended the Seditious Meetings Bill by declaring that none of its regulations were as severe as those in the old or the new France.<sup>140</sup> On another occasion, Windham announced that the ministers were prepared to exert a vigour beyond the law to put down agitation.<sup>141</sup> The Solicitor-General informed parliament that the bill did not obstruct meetings of "honest purpose",<sup>142</sup> and Dundas denied that the measure would prevent petitions to the government -- they would only be restricted to their proper purpose.<sup>143</sup> Indeed, declared another government supporter, the bill only applied to meetings which wished to consider an alteration in church or state!<sup>144</sup>

As far as Fox was concerned, no attack made by the Stuarts on the English constitution had been as alarming as the proposed

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137. Parliamentary Debates, LXVIII, 193, 255, 271, 282.

138. Petitions opposing the measures totalled one hundred, and those in support, sixty-four, but the number of signatures totalled 130,000 opposed to 30,000 in favor (Annual Register, 1796, 41).

139. Parliamentary Debates, LXVIII, 130.

140. Ibid., LXVIII, 138, 140.

141. Ibid., LXVIII, 323.

142. Ibid., LXVIII, 195.

143. Ibid., LXVIII, 228.

144. Ibid., LXVIII, 244.



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 legislation. The enormous influence of the crown from the beginning of the present reign had only been counteracted by the prevailing liberty of the press and liberty of speech, he declared.<sup>146</sup> From a practical viewpoint, Fox considered that such oppressive measures increased rather than decreased the danger of domestic conflict for, he pointed out, while men could be prevented from complaining, they could not be prevented from feeling, and "if men speak less they will feel more, and arms will be left them as the only resource to procure redress."<sup>147</sup>

The opposition tried every possible means to defeat or at least to delay the bills. Sheridan asked for a committee to study the extent of the danger of seditious meetings before parliament approved the government measures.<sup>148</sup> Another motion proposed a delay of one week in approving the Seditious Meetings Bill.<sup>149</sup> Finally the opposition left the House of Commons on the day the bill was to be discussed in committee. Fox defended the secession on the grounds that the measure was so vicious that no amendments could make an improvement.<sup>150</sup> None the less the action was criticized for the vote on the various clauses showed that a full opposition might have mitigated the severity of some of the worst clauses.<sup>151</sup>

The Whigs were back in parliament for the final reading of

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- 145. Parliamentary Debates, LXVIII, 320.
  - 146. Ibid., LXVIII, 183.
  - 147. Ibid., LXVIII, 184.
  - 148. Ibid., LXVIII, 167.
  - 149. Ibid., LXVIII, 400.
  - 150. Ibid., LXVIII, 560.
  - 151. Annual Register, 1796, 43.





both bills. Fox solemnly told the members that if the measure against Seditious Meetings became law, contrary to the opinion of the majority of the nation, then resistance was not a matter of moral consideration but only one of prudence.<sup>152</sup> His own views, he said, were that discontent should be destroyed by doing away with the corruption of government, by abolishing the slave trade and by showing the country that the House of Commons was tenacious of the rights of the people and worthy of being entrusted with their privileges.<sup>153</sup> He declared that the opposition, in exciting the spirit of the country, had saved the small remnant of liberty that was left as a "memorial of what we once enjoyed."<sup>154</sup>

The Annual Register notes that no laws were ever received by the public with the disapprobation that greeted the "Pitt and Grenville Acts".<sup>155</sup> There was justification for the government's alarm over the widespread discontent which led to the attack on the king, but the attack itself appeared to bring a greater personal loyalty to George III.<sup>156</sup> Furthermore, the general protest against the bills could not have come only from the small number of radical reformers. Evidently the public considered the measures to be unnecessary and the stubborn determination of the ministry and parliament to institute such oppressive regulations cannot be condoned. Pitt's quandry was the result of his own actions during the previous five years. He had refused liberal measures when the country was fairly tranquil and at

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152. Parliamentary Debates, LXVIII, 563.

153. Ibid., LXVIII, 570.

154. Ibid., LXVIII, 571.

155. Annual Register, 1796, 45.

156. Ibid., 1795, 39 (Chron.); 1796, 39.



peace. Once started on the path to oppression, he could not (or would not) desist when the times were more difficult and discontent had made conciliation more dangerous.

Parliament's approval of the bills against seditious meetings and treasonable practices rang the death-knell for decades to the hopes of the reformers and the liberals in England. The Foxite Whigs were now described as a "remnant of factious traitors",<sup>157</sup> and Fox and Sheridan were cartooned<sup>158</sup> as bludgeon-men ready to attack the king and the ministers. The Corresponding Society, the only remaining association of the three original important organizations, lost even more members and while still alive in 1797, was permanently weakened<sup>159</sup> and lacking in funds and unity. Fox, was still optimistic. At the end of 1795 he reported with satisfaction the country's behavior over the ministry's repressive measures and despite the bad divisions in the house, he felt the opposition had<sup>160</sup> gained strength.

Fox made one more attempt to have parliament reconsider its decision on the Seditious Meetings Act. Over a year later, in May, 1797, he asked leave to bring in a bill to repeal the measure. Under that legislation, he said, meetings and petitions had been prevented for extraordinary reasons. What benefit had been derived from the measure, he asked, and then noted how plots and discontent had grown in Ireland since the institution of measures which prohibited public meetings. Such legislation,

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157. Windham, Windham Papers, I, 321.

158. Wright, Caricature History, 498.

159. Brown, French Revolution in England, 153, 154.

160. Russell, Memorials, III, 127.





declared Fox, amounted to telling the people that they might applaud the government but they could not condemn. Strength could only be obtained through liberty. Despite his plea,<sup>161</sup> his motion was refused.

After 1795 there was little the opposition could accomplish in parliament for the cause of liberty and reform. During 1796 Fox noted that the country seemed apathetic toward politics and he appeared to share the general discouragement.<sup>162</sup> There were reliable reports that Fox was approached by the conservative Whigs in the hope that he would bring his followers into the government but evidently he quietly refused, saying that he would oppose the present system whether he was in or out of power.<sup>163</sup> Indeed, his position was now even farther from those of his former colleagues than ever before, for he told his nephew that he now believed a reform of parliament to take precedence over the restoration of its just influence in the English system of government. He said he would go even further than he had previously in agreeing with the popular or democratic party, because the democrats were the only alternative to "euthanasia" and he hoped that the aristocratic influence might<sup>164</sup> restrain the democrats from going too far.

This attitude was evident during Fox's speech supporting Grey's motion for a reform of parliament in May, 1797. Fox told the house that all his doubts on the subject of parliamentary reform were gone. He was convinced that the nation

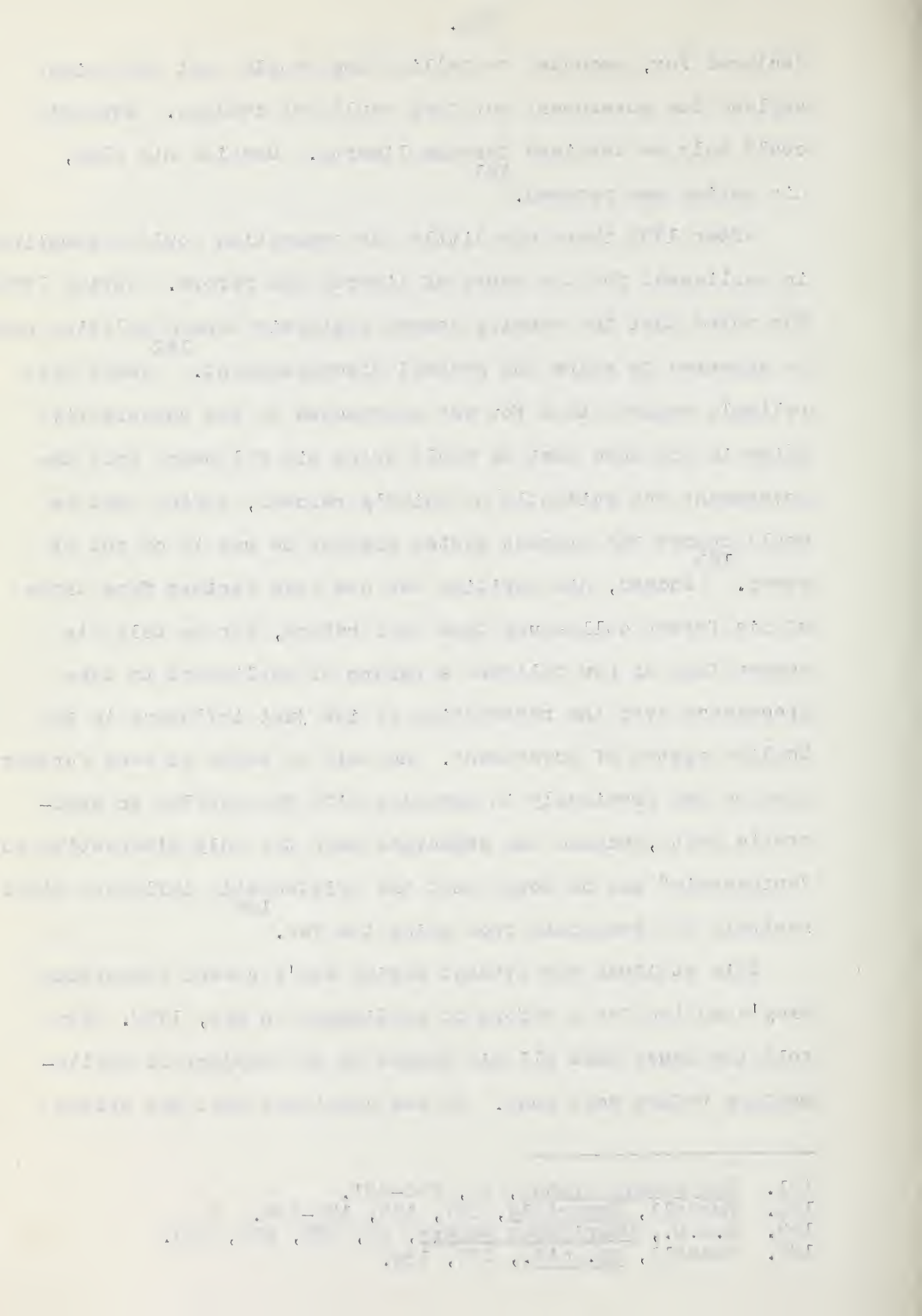
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161. The Modern Orator, II, 648-651.

162. Russell, Memorials, III, 129, 132-134.

163. H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 278, 279, 283.

164. Russell, op. cit., III, 135.



could only be rescued from her peril and her distress by reform. Bold measures must be taken immediately to avoid slavery<sup>165</sup> or anarchy. Parliament was not sufficiently representative of the people, he said, and only genuine representation could give the country the strength she needed.<sup>166</sup> Fox attacked the closed boroughs and the "degeneracy and hypocrisy" of the whole system of representation.<sup>167</sup> He gave his approval to Grey's plan to extend the county representation and to give the vote to householders as a means of obtaining a wide, yet responsible, body of electors. He still disapproved of universal suffrage for the same reasons he disapproved of votes for women: such voters<sup>168</sup> would be governed by their dependence upon others. Fox was satisfied that Grey's measure would lessen the number of discontented.<sup>169</sup> The motion was defeated, but the opposition numbers<sup>170</sup> climbed to ninety-three.

This measure for reform was the last stand for several years of the Foxite Whigs in parliament. Following the defeat of the motion they seceded from Parliament. During the reform debate Fox declared that after viewing the past conduct of the house and the blindness of its actions he could no longer<sup>171</sup> see the point in "fruitless exertions". He would return, he declared, when he could contribute to re-establishing parliament in its old position for willingly would he give his support

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165. The Modern Orator, 653, 655.

166. Ibid., II, 660, 663.

167. Ibid., II, 668.

168. Ibid., II, 672, 273.

169. Ibid., II, 676.

170. Ibid., II, 678.

171. Ibid., II, 676.





"to any administration that shall restore to the country its outraged rights, and re-establish its strength upon the basis of free representation."<sup>172</sup>

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172. The Modern Orator, II, 678.



### SECTION III

### ASSESSMENT





THE MAN OF 1797.

Any attempt at an assessment of Charles James Fox as he appeared in 1797 must take into consideration the secession of Fox and his followers from parliament in the spring of that year, for that action aroused comment on the "unpatriotic" behavior of the seceders.<sup>1</sup> Probably only determined anti-Foxites would dismiss the secession in such a fashion but Fox's decision to secede from parliament is puzzling in view of his life-long disapproval of such an action. During the American War he had refused to join the prominent Whigs in leaving parliament<sup>2</sup> and as late as the spring of 1795 he had expressed his disapprobation of the idea of secession.<sup>3</sup> Even after he had acted upon his decision to retire from politics, he disliked what he termed a "declared" secession and maintained that the retirement of the Foxite Whigs from politics was a "voluntary dispersion" rather than the result of a definite agreement.<sup>4</sup> If this was his attitude, why did Fox make the decision to secede?

One biographer suggests that Fox's health was the factor that tipped the balance in favor of the retirement for which he longed.<sup>5</sup> Fox's nephew evidently believed that the decision stemmed from indolence.<sup>6</sup> Yet less than a year previous to the secession Fox had been described as in the best of health and<sup>7</sup> evidently he had been inclined toward indolence since youth.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Wright, Caricature History, 512.
  2. Russell, Memorials, I, 130.
  3. See Chapter XII, 225.
  4. Russell, op. cit., III, 136, 144.
  5. Lascelles, Fox, 277.
  6. Ibid., 274.
  7. H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 279.
  8. See Chapter I, 9.



However, Fox's age and the more than twenty-five years he had spent in parliament (mostly in opposition) undoubtedly had an effect. Certainly once he had retired from parliament Fox showed<sup>9</sup> no desire to return even to a high office, but he did admit that had he been younger he would not have given up parliamentary<sup>10</sup> opposition without a greater struggle.

However, the real basis of Fox's decision to secede stemmed from the belief that he could no longer play a useful part in parliament. He must have realized that the battle for liberalism in England had virtually ended with the "Pitt and Grenville Acts" of 1795. So firmly was the Pitt administration established and so reactionary was the general attitude of the Commons, that the opposition could make only what Fox termed "fruitless<sup>11</sup> exertions". Even criticism of the government's war policy must have become exceedingly distasteful after the French had ended the attempt at negotiation in 1796 and England faced her victorious enemy alone. On several occasions after 1793 Fox commented<sup>12</sup> that only a sense of duty kept him from retirement and while in 1797 he hoped that the absence of the opposition from parliament might have a sobering effect upon the reactionary prejudices of the members, it was a realization of the futility of opposition that had the most profound influence upon him. Indeed, Fox declared that he would remain in retirement until he saw a very different attitude in parliament. As he saw little or no love of liberty in the country he declared himself finished

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9. Russell, Memorials, III, 272.

10. Ibid., III, 146.

11. The Modern Orator, II, 676.

12. See Chapter XII.



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with public affairs for he had fulfilled his duty to his own liberal principles and to his country.<sup>13</sup> While the secession of the Whigs may not have been the best move (for only in parliament could criticism of the government be made freely) Fox had not denied his principles in seceding when he was convinced that he had done everything possible for the cause of English liberalism.

The criticism of Charles Fox over the 1797 secession was, of course, only an extension of the criticism that his actions, since the outbreak of the French Revolution, had been guided only by a hatred of the existing English government and by personal ambition. However, there were contemporaries of Fox who, while they disagreed with his opinions, believed that he had acted with sincerity and integrity in the years following 1789.<sup>14</sup> Despite a course of action that often appears violent and factious, an examination of the position Fox took on the major issues during these years does exonerate him.

While Fox's consideration of the war with France and his actions in parliament based upon that consideration were marred by a faulty judgement of the dangers to England, his judgement of the situation does not detract from the sincerity of his opposition. Fox opposed the war itself because he had a profound hatred of war on any grounds. He disparaged the attitude of the ministers toward republican France and their refusal to negotiate with her because he firmly believed that any nation should be allowed to work out her own solution to domestic

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13. Russell, Memorials, III, 144, 146.

14. H.M.C., Charlemont Papers, II, 239, 242.



difficulties without the interference of other countries. Lecky claims that in both the American and the French Revolutionary Wars Fox, by his zeal for the "rebels", showed a lack of patriotism.<sup>15</sup> Superficially there seems to be substantiation for this claim because Fox was not nationalistic in the narrow sense of supporting the actions of his own country at all times and at all costs. Fox, however, did have a great love of England and her institutions, but his sense of justice was far too deeply entrenched to allow him to condone any course of action which he considered to be unjust. In both the American and the French Wars he championed the "enemy" not because it was opposing an English government which he disliked, but because he believed that the actions of that English government were unjustifiable.

Fox's love of justice and liberty formed his attitude toward the French Revolution itself. While he was disgusted and disheartened by the growth of violence in France, he retained the hope that the French eventually would achieve a system of government which would give them the personal and political liberty they had been forbidden under the old monarchy. While again Fox may have been guilty of poor judgement in his consideration of the effects of the new French nationalism, he did act upon the hope of the ultimate achievement of liberty by his fellowmen.

In his attitude in the domestic affairs of England in the years preceding 1797, Fox acted upon the liberal principles which had guided his political career, and through his defence

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15. Lecky, History of England, IV, 438, 439.





of English liberalism during this period Fox made his greatest contribution to English political life.

Probably the most momentous event in English political history of the period between 1789 and 1797 was the split of the Whig party. Here, as in his opposition to the French War, the actions of Fox could be interpreted as arising from personal ambition for Fox, while holding a firm belief in the party system of government, must certainly share the blame for the break-up of the old Whig party. Although Fox did have a real faith in the party system and wished to hold the Whigs together if that was possible, he would not do so at the sacrifice of his own belief in personal and political liberty which he considered to be the true Whig principles.

Strangely enough the continued opposition of the Foxite Whigs in parliament after the party split did much to establish a definite two-party system of government in England.<sup>16</sup> From the group centered around Fox grew one of the great political parties of the Nineteenth Century, and it was Fox who gave the tradition to the new Whig party that gained the faith and support of the people in the reform crisis of 1832.<sup>17</sup> Fox never became a democrat but during the war years from 1793 to 1797 he formulated a steadfast belief in the necessity of a reform of parliament and his concept of that reform grew far beyond the narrow limits of virtual representation which he had upheld under Burke's influence. This broader view was the one he bequeathed to his Whig descendants. As he established religious toleration as a Whig principle,

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16. Pares, George III, 191, 194, 195.

17. Butler, Reform Bill, 3, 17.



so he gave the new Whig party a new belief in the need for a reform of parliament.

While the traditions Fox gave to the Nineteenth Century Whigs were to be of vital importance, the liberal stand he took in parliament from 1792 to 1797 was of equal importance to the whole English nation. Wraxall claims in his Memoirs that had Fox been in power during these years he would have acted as Pitt did - with repressive measures to curb the agitation of the discontented.<sup>18</sup> This contention appears to be most unlikely. Fox's attitude toward the French Revolution and toward the ambitions of the dissenters and the reformers in the years between 1789 and 1792 was far more liberal than that of Pitt. Fox had a firm belief in what he considered to be the rights of his fellow-men and had he been at the head of the government he undoubtedly would have made strenuous efforts by concessions to dispell, or at least to moderate, discontent in England. It is equally doubtful whether he would have sided with the reactionary forces even after the agitation of the radical reformers began to alarm the conservative public, for he had not Pitt's fear of "French principles" and he appears to have formed a more correct estimate than Pitt of the numbers of discontented in England. A final deterrence to any move toward repressive measures as far as Fox was concerned would have been his ever-present fear of increasing the power of the crown at the expense of the rights of parliament or the people.

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18. Wraxall, Memoirs, 173.





While the Continental War and the unrest in Britain were of vital concern between 1792 and 1797, Fox had the vision to see beyond the immediate problems to the heart of the political controversy of the day - the possibility of the extinction of the traditional spirit of liberty in England. It was fortunate for the cause of English liberalism that Fox was mentally and spiritually incapable of joining in the conservative reaction of the majority of the Whig party and of the English nation. As long as Fox declared his own liberal sentiments and defended the principles of the English reformers within parliament, the agitation of the discontented in England could not be completely dismissed by the conservative-minded as the clamor of people of little consequence. Through his continued opposition in parliament after judicial proceedings and repressive legislation finally quelled political agitation outside its doors, Fox left a tradition of parliamentary championship of the liberal cause. His was the voice that kept the spirit of liberalism alive in England, for when all other opposition to oppression had been muffled, his was the voice that still could be heard raised in protest.

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